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# THE TIMES

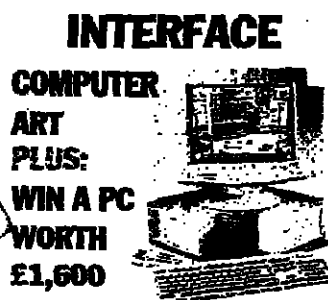
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No. 65,556

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## Divorce for the Yorks today

### Duchess to lose HRH style under £2 million settlement

By Alan Hamilton and Emma Wilkins

THE Duke and Duchess of York will today be granted a "quickie" divorce to end their ten-year marriage, it was announced last night.

The couple's case will be heard in the Family Division of the High Court at Somerset House, London, this morning. A decree absolute is expected to dissolve the marriage finally by the end of May.

In a statement issued jointly through their solicitors the couple said that the decision to divorce was a personal one, and for the sake of their children, which both regarded as of paramount importance. No further statements would be made and no further information provided.

The statement added that the couple's two children, Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie, would continue to live with the Duchess, although both parents would participate fully in their upbringing. It also said that the Duchess would continue to be known as the Duchess of York but would drop the appellation Her Royal Highness bestowed on her by the Queen at the time of her marriage.

Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson married in the full glare of television coverage in Westminster Abbey in July 1986. They announced their separation in March 1992, and have since lived apart, although they have occasionally been seen together at events involving their children.

Downing Street last night said that the Prime Minister had been kept fully informed of the divorce plans. Officials said that there would be no further comment from John Major's office, as there were no constitutional implications. The Duke is fourth in line of succession to the throne, and his children fifth and sixth.

The announcement is understood to have been brought forward when it was learned that *The Daily Mail* was about to break the story. Palace officials said private-



Prince Andrew will take part in bringing up the children

ly that the Queen, who celebrates her 70th birthday on Sunday, had been anxious for some time that the failed marriages of her two elder sons should be brought to a quick and tidy conclusion but they stressed that the monarch had not written to the Duke and Duchess, as she had done to the Prince and Princess of Wales, and had not applied pressure on them in any other way. She had been kept fully informed and was saddened by the decision.

The Palace said that the Duke and Duchess remained close friends. They refused to discuss any financial arrangements accompanying the divorce, which they said were entirely a personal matter.

It emerged last night, however, that the Duchess is expected to receive a relatively modest settlement of £2 million, primarily intended to care for the couple's two children. Of the total, £1.4 million is to be invested in a trust for the children, leaving little more than £500,000 for the Duchess to maintain her lifestyle and to wrestle with

her debts. The deal is said to have been worked out at the time of the separation.

When the announcement was made yesterday the Duchess, aged 36, was in the middle of a week's skiing holiday with her children, Beatrice, 7, and Eugenie, 6, in Verbier, Switzerland. The Duke, who is 36 and a full-time Royal Navy officer, was at Buckingham Palace. They were last seen in public together ten days ago when they left their home at Sunninghill, near Windsor Castle, to help round up polo ponies which had escaped during a fire.

Although the decision to divorce is officially said to have been taken jointly, the indications are that the prime mover was the Duchess. It is known that she has favoured such a step for some time, while the Duke has been reluctant to take the initiative, hoping that some reconciliation might be possible. The sudden move is seen as a bold and decisive step by the Duchess to cut her losses, given recent adverse publicity over her debts, said to be £3

million, and a climate of adverse publicity.

Later this week the Duke is to part part in a lengthy naval exercise. The Duchess is scheduled to make her next public appearance in Leeds next week, at the launch of a drugs education programme.

Last night Dr David Hope, Archbishop of York, said he was praying for the couple. "I am aware that such decisions are never made easily or without careful consideration," Lord St John of Fawsley said. "I hope that stories about the Yorks will disappear from the headlines now, but my hopes are greater than my expectations."

□ The statement issued on behalf of the Duke and Duchess said:

"The Duke and Duchess of York today announced through their respective solicitors, Henry Boyd-Carpenter of Messrs Farrer & Co and Douglas Alexander of Messrs Gordon Dadds, that they have agreed, after more than two years' separation, that their marriage should formally be ended. Accordingly the necessary legal proceedings are under way and it is anticipated that the Decree Absolute will be made at the end of May."

"The decision by the Duke and Duchess is a personal one, and theirs alone. Her Royal Highness The Duchess of York has chosen not to use the style 'Her Royal Highness' and will continue to be The Duchess of York."

"At the express wish of The Duke and Duchess and in the interests of their children, which they regard as of paramount importance, no further statement will be made or information provided. Consistent with the statement made by the Buckingham Palace Press Office on 28 June 1993 the children will continue to live with The Duchess, and both parents will participate fully in their upbringing."

Royal Divorce, pages 2, and 3  
Nigella Lawson, page 17  
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The Duchess with Princesses Beatrice (left) and Eugenie are on a skiing holiday in Verbier, Switzerland

## One minute to end a marriage

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

THE marriage of the Duke and Duchess of York will effectively end today without pomp or ceremony at the divorce registry in London.

The petition, lodged by the Duke, is the last in a list of 29 "quickie" divorce matters to be rubber-stamped by the Senior District judge, Gerald Angel, in Court One at Somerset House.

The grounds cited for the divorce — a fast-track procedure which will be scrapped by the Government's current divorce reforms — is that he and the Duchess have lived apart for two years. If either

had not consented to the divorce, then they would have had to wait five years.

The hearing, scheduled for 10.30, is likely to last less than a minute, even though lawyers can be present. The names of all the parties on the list will be read and, barring any objections, decrees nisi will be granted "en bloc". Within six weeks the final decree, or decree absolute, will follow in the post. Both are then free to remarry.

Because all the paperwork has been signed and sealed behind the scenes, the marriage will end, along with the

others ranging alphabetically from Mr and Mrs Agvayong to Mr and Mrs Sacker, with a minimum of ceremony.

The days in which couples appeared in court amid public recriminations were effectively ended when the "quickie" procedure was introduced more than 20 years ago.

Under the Government's reforms, couples will have to wait at least one year before they can divorce and they will have had to reach agreement on children and finances, which is often not the case at present, before being granted what will be a divorce order.



"The secret of life? Become a divorce lawyer"

#### Shares record

Shares rose to a record level for the second day in a row, with the FTSE 100 index closing 34.8 points higher at 3,825.3. Pages 25, 28 and 30

Byline: The Times overseas 9 p.m. 30. Austria Sch 40; Belgium Bfr 325; Canada Cdn\$ 125; Denmark Dkr 16.00; France Ffr 14.00; Germany DM 4.50; Gibraltar Gbp 2.00; Greece Dr 500; Netherlands f 4.50; Italy Lire 1,000; Japan Yen 140; Luxembourg Lit 60; Madrid Ptas 160; New Zealand NZ\$ 2.00; Norway Nkr 4.00; Portugal Esc 200; Spain Ptas 160; Sweden Skr 10.50; Switzerland Sfr 2.00; Tunisia Din 2.00; USA \$ 1.00.

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## Ministers launch BSE court battle with Brussels

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

THE Government put itself in conflict with Brussels again yesterday as it announced a legal challenge to the European Union's worldwide ban on the export of British beef and a £1 billion package of measures to help the industry.

It confirmed compensation for the destruction of up to a million older cattle a year to prevent their coming into the food chain and said that it was looking at the selective slaughter of animals considered most at risk from "mad cow" disease.

But it ruled out the mass slaughter of herds as it strives to eradicate BSE and restore consumer confidence.

Heralding the most serious court confrontation yet between Brussels and London, John Major told MPs that action would be taken in the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg to end "this totally unjustified ban".

At the same time, he wrote to Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, President Chirac of France, Lamberto Dini, the Italian Prime Minister, and Jacques Santer, the European Commission President, re-

newing his demand for the ban to be lifted as soon as possible.

The Cabinet decided to launch the court challenge yesterday against the background of increasing evidence, particularly in the Staffordshire South East by-election, that its handling of the crisis has further damaged its standing with the public.

Ministers favouring a challenge, notably Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Tony Newton, the Commons leader, had been strengthened in their

case by the recent admissions by Franz Fischler, the EU Agriculture Commissioner, and Mr Santer that they were happy to eat British beef. The move comes as British beef consumption has returned to about 85 per cent of pre-crisis levels.

The ban is being contested on the ground that it goes against scientific evidence. Mr Major told cheering Conservative MPs: "The export ban on British beef imposed by the Community is more motivated by the interests of other countries' own beef markets than it is about public health."

Under the compensation package announced later by Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, farmers will receive about £500 an animal for the destruction of cattle slaughtered at the age of 30 months or more. The scheme, 70 per cent funded by the EU, will cost about £550 million and come into effect on April 29. The Government will pay for slaughter and destruction.

He also announced, among other measures, a top-up scheme worth about £80 million to compensate farmers with older beef cattle whose market value is above £500

and a £110 million scheme to help the slaughtering industry which has unsold meat worth £132 million, threatening widespread company failures unless action is taken.

The minister also promised urgent work on a scheme to exempt specialist, BSE-free beef herds from the 30-month rule. He said the case for exempting such animals, which often do not mature until after 30 months, was strong.

Package details, page 12  
Simon Jenkins, page 18  
Letters, page 19

#### Protest over Cyprus killing

The parents of Louise Jensen, the Danish tour guide who was killed in Cyprus by three drunken British riflemen, have protested to the Prime Minister over the Army's failure to offer them compensation or an apology. Page 6

#### Secret base

Russia has secretly built a vast underground military complex in the southern Ural Mountains, the Clinton Administration said. The complex covers an area the size of Washington and is served by its own railway. Page 13

What is the function of  
**NUMBER 1?**



The picture ©1996 Polygram



# £1.4m for girls as mother tries to balance the books

By Emma Wilkins

THE royal divorce will ease the Duchess of York's financial crisis, which stems from her inability to restrain her lifestyle. A £2 million settlement, negotiated on the separation four years ago, is likely to form part of the divorce package, but the Duchess's debts of some £3 million will not be met by the Queen.

The Royal Family's main concern is to secure the financial future of Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie by placing money in trust, primarily for their education: £1.4 million is to be placed in trust for the princesses, from which £600,000 has been earmarked for a house they will eventually own. The Duchess will receive about £500,000 and the rest will be invested to provide a cash income to look after the young princesses.

Palace officials made it clear yesterday that the Duchess's personal finances were her own affair. Despite her best efforts to make a fortune from her children's books, the Duchess's fundamental problem is that her spending continues to far exceed her income. A love of expensive foreign holidays is matched only by excessive domestic costs: the wages bill for a



Kingsbourne: the home rented for £72,000 a year

string of servants at the Duchess's rented home, Kingsbourne, in Wentworth, Surrey, is some £32,000 a month while the eight-bedroom house itself costs £72,000 a year to rent.

Sunninghill Park, the Berkshire mansion which the Queen built for the couple as a wedding present, is occupied occasionally by the Duke. The Duchess and Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie are regular weekend visitors. The Queen's

displeasure at the Duchess's reckless attitude to money was made clear earlier this year when Buckingham Palace took the unusual step of announcing that the Queen was no longer prepared financially to support her wayward daughter-in-law.

The Duchess's ability to shop is legendary. On a recent trip to New York, she is said to have spent £3,000 on 20 pairs of shoes during a half hour shopping spree. Only the best

hotels in the smartest resorts will do for the Duchess, who flies on Concorde and buys first-class seats for her entourage. She is the only member of the royal family voluntarily to pay the full fare: others expect to be upgraded from Business Class. When she stays in New York, it is always at the Carlyle Hotel, where suites cost up to £1,000 a night.

An appearance in last month's *Hello!* magazine, which shot a series of photographs in Paris, may have earned a few thousand pounds but was widely criticised as cashing in on her status. She hoped to make a fortune from her *Budgie the Little Helicopter* books. A recent deal with a New York publisher to exploit two new children's characters (one is a globe-trotting little princess) has yet to bear financial fruit.

Similarly, a deal with Ray Chambers, a New Jersey millionaire, is yet to prove the financial cure-all which the Duchess had hoped for. It has been forecast that *Sleepy Kids*, the company which owns the worldwide TV and merchandising rights for *Budgie*, would earn about £800,000 in the United States this year. The Duchess is unlikely to receive more than 20 per cent of a yearly income of £160,000 at the most.

The Duke, whose civil list payment of £249,000 is refunded to the Treasury by the Queen, earns £30,544 as a Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Navy. Up to 80 per cent of his civil list income goes on staff costs, but he has been making a handsome financial contribution to his daughters.

The Duchess is negotiating with Tri Star pictures for an option on her story *Heather Blaze*, about the adventures of two mares with parallel but different lives.

There is talk of a Hollywood film on the life of the young Queen Victoria, based on two historical works written by the Duchess.

## CHRONOLOGY

March 1986: engagement of Prince Andrew to Sarah Ferguson, daughter of the Prince of Wales's polo manager.  
July 1986: wedding of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson, both 26, become the Duke and Duchess of York.  
October 1986: First reports of marriage strain due to Duke's absences from home on a helicopter instructor's course.  
August 1988: Daughter Beatrice born.  
March 1990: Daughter Eugenie born.

May 1990: Tezcan oilman Steve Wyatt files Duchess and Beatrice to Morocco for a holiday.  
January 1992: Discovery of intimate photographs of Duchess and Mr Wyatt in Morocco.  
March 1992: Palace announces official separation.  
May 1992: Duchess moves out of Sunninghill Park to six-bedroom house on Wentworth estate in Surrey.  
August 20, 1992: Britain scandalised by Italian paparazzo's photographs of John Bryan kissing the

topless Duchess's toes.  
March 1993: Duchess tells *Harpers and Queen*: "I want out of the whole thing so I can get on with my life and stop being blamed for everything."  
December 1994: Possibility of divorce raised by the Duchess at charity party.  
December 13, 1994: She admits to taking Aids tests.  
January 1996: Reports that the Duchess owes £3 million. The Queen says that she will not bail her out. Duchess seals a American publishing deal.

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Megan Megan.

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The exuberant Duchess has been unable to shake off criticism of her love of shopping and expensive holidays

## Falklands veteran who has tried to keep his head down

By Carol Midgley

WHILE his wife has loomed ever larger in tabloid headlines, the Duke of York has had a low profile since their official separation in 1992.

The Queen's favourite son, once one of the most extroverted and photogenic of the royals, who fought for his country in the Falklands War, now cuts a solitary figure whose life revolves around his two daughters, his Royal Navy career and golf.

His weeks are split between his base, HMS Osprey on Portland, Dorset, where he is a senior pilot, his former marital home at Sunninghill, near Windsor, and a variety of golf courses.

Although he still carries out royal engagements, they are relatively few and rarely high profile. He has followed advice from Buckingham Palace advisers to keep his head below the parapet, maintaining his dignity in trying circumstances for the sake of his children.

The Duke has never made any secret of his enduring affection for his wife and is known to have made several attempts at reconciliation. Only last month it was reported that he had offered to abandon his naval career in a last effort to save his marriage, a move said to alarm the Queen. The offer was declined and it is reported that he then reluctantly agreed to a divorce.

Today, two months after his 36th birthday, royal commentators say he leads a somewhat "sad and directionless life".

The man who before his marriage was an exuberant bachelor prince linked with a string of glamorous women including the actresses Koo Stark and Katie Rabett, now

prefers to spend many of his evenings alone watching videos. According to friends, he enjoys thrillers, special effects and action movies, of which his favourite is *Top Gun*.

A tendency to compensate for his apparent loneliness by eating junk food has led to an expanding waistline and a weight of about 15 stone. *Stimulus* magazine recently named him their "Top Tubby" and newspaper headline writers have long labelled him the Duke of Pork.

As the senior pilot of the Fleet Air Arm's 815 Squadron based at HMS Osprey, the only squadron in the Navy which operates the Lynx helicopter, the Duke is in day-to-day charge, leading the squadron in the rank of lieutenant commander.

In the past he confessed to

feelings of isolation while serving at sea. "As a commanding officer you can on occasions get extremely lonely and isolated if you're not careful," he said, comparing mine-hunting to watching paint dry. Since his marriage failed, the Duke has been seen with friends with several women, including the model Catrina Skepper and Lord Braybrooke's daughter Caroline Neville.

Asked at the age of 22 why his photographs often dealt with loneliness he said: "I'm not lonely. I'm a recluse. I just try to keep out of people's way."

Of all the Queen's children, and from an early age, he gained the reputation of being the most adventurous and individualistic.

He was billed the Playboy

Prince, the square-jawed helicopter pilot who fought with distinction in the Falklands and came home with a red rose between his teeth.

But he had also gained a reputation for being spoilt and prone to arrogance. Used to getting his own way, he was known to have insisted that even his closest friends called him "Sir".

The Prince's education began at the age of four with a group of children under a Palace governess. At eight he went to Heatherdown Preparatory School near Ascot, Berkshire. At 13 he followed the Prince of Wales to Gordonstoun School in Moray, Scotland, also spending two terms at a Canadian school in Ontario.

It was at Gordonstoun that he acquired the reputation of playing the "Great I Am" but, like his brothers before and after him, was not deemed up to the job of head boy. He was more noted for his sporting and theatrical activities than for his academic prowess, although he left with three A levels in 1979.

He had made his first solo flight as a glider pilot in 1976 and decided to follow his father and brother into the Royal Navy, choosing a 12-year short-career commission, which has since extended, as a helicopter pilot.

His career in the Navy got off to an inauspicious start. In the mess one evening he grandly informed a rear admiral: "You can call me Andy."

"And you can call me Sir," was the icy reply.

But by 1982 he was on board HMS *Invincible* bound for the Falklands. He was to see active service as a second pilot of a Sea King helicopter on anti-submarine and transport duties.



The Duke of York early on in his helicopter-flying career with the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm

## Couple's legal teams line up from opposite sides of social spectrum

By Frances Gibb and Stephen Farrelly

THE statement announcing the end of the Duke and Duchess of York's marriage was issued yesterday by two leading divorce lawyers who now act for the couple. They come from starkly contrasting backgrounds and to some extent each reflects his client.

Henry Boyd-Carpenter, the Queen's solicitor who is acting for the Duke, is of the old world, strictly correct and courteous school and very much of the Establishment.

He is a partner with Farrer & Co where he was the obvious choice to inherit the mantle when Sir Matthew, who was previously the Queen's lawyer, retired two years ago. Mr Boyd-Carpenter, 56, an old Carthusian who went to Balliol, is described by colleagues and other lawyers who have to deal with him as "delightful".

The Duchess, by contrast, has gone to Douglas Alexiou, highly rated as a divorce "heavyweight" and listed as

one of the "magic circle" of London's divorce lawyers. She picked Mr Alexiou after switching from Withers, the firm that acted for her at the time the separation was announced and who helped negotiate the settlement announced yesterday.

One source said: "It is a very fair deal. You have to remember that the Duke is a serving officer, he does not have vast sums of money. The whole thing was sorted out amicably and without problems."

The deal includes a financial settlement for the Duchess as well as arrangements governing the upbringing of the children, in which the couple are to share jointly.

Senior partner with the Mayfair law firm Gordon Dadds, Mr Alexiou, 53, is a former chairman of Tottenham Hotspur Football Club. Charming but tough, he is likely to have struck a fair bargain for the Duchess, but without ruffling feathers.

He is known for his soothing bedside manner and his discretion - "I never discuss clients," he said yesterday. His style is nonetheless more abrasive than Mr Boyd-Carpenter's. His clients have included Sarah Brightman, the singer who was married to the then Andrew Lloyd-Webber.

In addition to being the Queen's solicitor, Henry Boyd-Carpenter takes his other Establishment duties seriously. He has maintained links with his old school as a director of Charnhouse Enterprises Ltd, is a director of the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture and a member of the council of the Chelsea Physic Garden.

Mr Alexiou is known to his friends and colleagues as Douglas, but was christened Dimitris Augustus Alexiou. He lives in an exclusive area of Kingston-upon-Thames, south-west London, on the borders of Richmond Park in a detached but discreet Victorian

House in a cul de sac. His house is just 15 miles from the Duchess of York's Berkshire residence.

His wife was equally discreet last night. "My husband's business is his business. That's that. End of conversation."

The divorce of the Duke and Duchess will have few religious implications until either couple decide to remarry. Although Church of England clergy are allowed under the law of the land to remarry a divorced person in church, under church rules marriage is for life and a divorced man or woman cannot remarry in church if their former partner is still living.

Because the Queen is supreme governor of the church, the church wedding of a senior royal could be a source of potential embarrassment. If either of them wished to remarry in church, the Duke and Duchess would be encouraged to go outside England, as did the Duke of York's elder sister, the Princess Royal, who remarried in Scotland.



# Duchess who made Palace see red



Alan Hamilton reports that the Queen has grown increasingly anxious for the Yorks and the Waleses to bring their messy affairs to neat and final conclusions

WHEN the Duke and Duchess of York announced their separation in March 1992, one of the kinder courtiers at Buckingham Palace privately described the former Sarah Ferguson as "sweet-natured but vulgar". Another, less discreetly, confided that the knives were out for a woman regarded as a loose cannon on the deck of a royal ship which has become ever more storm-tossed.

Pity the Queen as she approaches her 70th birthday on Sunday. There must have been moments in the past three years when she felt that a life devoted to the consummate practice of constitutional monarchy was unravelling in her hands, and that the rock of monarchical stability had turned to sand and was trickling through her fingers.

The perception of the Royal Family as a model family may be an outdated concept dreamed up by Queen Victoria, ably supported by Walter Bagehot, that has had its day. But the Queen has been in no doubt that the untidy loose ends of her two elder sons' failed marriages have done nothing but damage the good name of the Crown, and she has grown increasingly anxious that the Waleses and the Yorks bring their messy affairs to a neat conclusion.

When Sarah Ferguson breezed on to the royal scene in 1985, gaily throwing chocolate profiteroles at the object of her desire across a country-house dinner table, many saw her as a breath of fresh air in the musty royal corridors, and a perfect foil for the seemingly demure, glamorous but shy Princess of Wales. With her Titian hair and expansive manner, she seemed an ideal partner for Prince Andrew, a headstrong war hero who had seen active service in the Falklands and who was himself a bit of a prankster.

Older heads tutted that Miss Ferguson had what is politely known as "a past", lived mainly in the fast lane with such partners as the racing driver Paddy McNally. The fact that she came from a broken home, with her mother remarried to an Argentinian polo player, seemed at the time not to matter: the Princess of Wales, then at the height of her popularity, had after all not emerged either from a solid nuclear family.

Prince Andrew had an equally well-publicised past, which had involved a string of encounters with actresses and other defiantly non-royal partners. Loud and a touch buffoonish, they seemed well suited.

The fairytale marriage was sealed in front of a worldwide television audience in Westminster Abbey on July 23, 1986. It lasted rather less than six years: even Catherine of Aragon lasted three times as long, and she was only the first of six.

What went wrong? Only the two parties involved in a marriage really know, but from the beginning it was clear that the Duchess of York fully intended to live her own life, particularly as her husband was spending long periods away from home as a full-time career officer in the Royal Navy. She was especially determined not to bow to the fusty conventions of court life, with the result that she rapidly lost such friends as she might have had in positions of influence at the Palace.

Eyebrows were raised in the first days of their marriage,

when they commissioned a large, purpose-built family house at Sunninghill, near Ascot, whose vulgar style immediately attracted to it the name *South York* — an echo of the television soap *Dallas*. Soon afterwards the Duchess announced that she needed to earn a living like every other modern married gal, and was to become a children's author.

Her *Budgie the Helicopter* books attracted their share of disaster. She was accused of plagiarism when it was discovered that a remarkably similar series had been published in the 1960s, and she was accused of worse when it was suggested that, instead of donating 90 per cent of the book's profits to charity, as had been understood, she was directing most of the proceeds into her personal account.

On their first overseas tour together, to Canada in 1987, the couple seemed gauche, he overweight and she clowning in awkward fashion. They accepted a pair of fur coats as gifts from a provincial nabob, an act which backfired seriously with the animal rights lobby in Britain.

While the Duke was pursuing his naval career, the Duchess appeared determined to keep up the social whirl and the same set of friends, that she had in her single days. She retained, in particular, her friendship with Paddy McNally.

Her endlessly energetic style, increasingly appeared not to suit her husband, tired when ashore from sea postings, or after a hard day's work at yet another demanding naval course. Many a night, he simply wanted to put his feet up, and the Duchess was increasingly seen at social functions without him.

Late in 1991, when the couple were still ostensibly together and looking after their two children Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie, a cleaner working in a Mayfair apartment found photographs showing the Duchess on holiday in Spain



The toe-sucking photos taken secretly in France

with a Texan, Steve Wyatt. The pictures were handed to police, but not before newspapers had been made fully aware of them.

By Christmas that year, the Duke and Duchess were at Sandringham talking informally to the Queen of separation. The embarrassment bandwagon has never stopped since. The Duchess's father, Major Ronald Ferguson, was photographed emerging from a Mayfair massage parlour, and was later the subject of an unpleasant kiss-and-tell biography by a woman with whom he had had an affair.

Worst of all, the Duchess, who devoted herself almost full-time to jetting around the world on exotic holidays and running up huge bills, was secretly photographed at a villa in the south of France



The Yorks' wedding had a worldwide audience but it ran into trouble early on, the Duke preferring a quiet life as the Duchess enjoyed the social whirl

having her toes sucked by her so-called "financial adviser", another Texan named John Bryan. What upset the Queen, and many others who saw the pictures, was that Bryan and the Duchess were being watched closely by her children, and not so closely by two slumbering royal protection police officers.

Bryan moved from being the Duchess's "financial adviser" and "unofficial press spokesman" to the new man in her life, escorting her on a South Pacific holiday after it was announced that she was separating from the Duke.

In London, he became her companion-around-town, arranging meetings with bankers and taking her to parties. Not everyone was so taken with the Texan. "He's got to be the biggest social climber of all time," said the Greek millionaire and gossip columnist Taki Theodoracopulos.

The Duke, meanwhile, became somewhat reclusive, spending long hours alone at Sunninghill while the Duchess moved into an expensive rented house. Once a photography buff fascinated by the inner workings of cameras, he found ever more solace in his new passion of golf.

Even in recent months, the Duchess has seemed incapable of putting the brakes on her jet-setting lifestyle, despite a warning from the Queen that the monarch had no intention of bailing her out of her mounting debts. Last month she flew at short notice halfway round the world, from the Middle East to Florida, in pursuit of the Austrian tennis star Thomas Muster, with whom she has been romantically linked.

When the Duchess appeared on the royal scene, she was regarded as a close ally of the Princess of Wales; the two at first seemed to provide support for each other, outsiders at sea in the unfriendly royal ocean. Although the reasons may be entirely different, the two women now seem to be facing a strangely similar fate. The ocean has not tamed them, but nor have they tamed the ocean.

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Making waves: the marriage has been consistently dogged by controversy

ALLIATION DOMESTIC CENTRAL HEATING ESTATE AGENTS PLUMBERS REMOVALS & ALWAYS CONSERVATORIES PUBS ACCOUNTANTS CAR BREAKDOWN RECOVERY CALL SERVICES FLORISTS PLUMBERS REPLACEMENT WINDOWS TAXIS & PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE REPAIRS ROOFING SERVICES LOCKSMITHS PIZZAS GLAZIERS CAR HIRE SOLICITORS TELEPHONES ELECTRICIANS HOTELS BLOCKED DRAINS & PIPE CLEANING COURIERS WING & INSTALLATION DOMESTIC CENTRAL HEATING ESTATE AGENTS PLUMBERS TAKEAWAYS CONSERVATORIES ACCOUNTANTS CAR BREAKDOWN RECOVERY GARAGE SERVICES FLORISTS REPLACEMENT WINDOWS TAXIS & PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE REPAIRS ROOFING SERVICES LOCKSMITHS PIZZAS GLAZIERS CAR HIRE SOLICITORS TELEPHONES ELECTRICIANS HOTELS BLOCKED DRAINS & PIPE CLEANING COURIERS WING & INSTALLATION DOMESTIC CENTRAL HEATING ESTATE AGENTS PLUMBERS TAKEAWAYS CONSERVATORIES ACCOUNTANTS CAR BREAKDOWN RECOVERY GARAGE SERVICES FLORISTS REPLACEMENT WINDOWS TAXIS & PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE REPAIRS ROOFING SERVICES LOCKSMITHS PIZZAS GLAZIERS CAR HIRE SOLICITORS TELEPHONES ELECTRICIANS 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# Paraglider bounces back from mile-high freefall

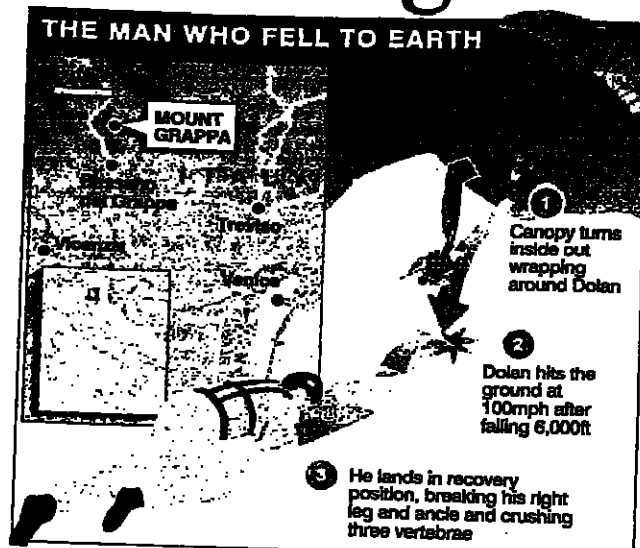
By PAUL WILKINSON  
AND KYLE SMITH

A PARAGLIDER who hit a boulder-strewn mountainside at 100mph after his parachute collapsed not only survived but expects to make a full recovery.

Pat Dolan escaped from a mile-high freefall with a broken right leg and three crushed vertebrae. He is paralysed from the waist down, but spinal injuries experts say he should be walking within months.

Mr Dolan's specially designed parachute, which acts as an aerofoil, collapsed when he flew into turbulence in the Dolomites in northern Italy. He had taken off from Mount Grappa at 5,000ft and soared to 6,500ft where he hit an "asymmetric" tuck, which caused his canopy to collapse inwards. It wrapped itself tightly around him, preventing him from releasing his emergency parachute.

"There was no drag on my canopy to slow me down because it had wrapped itself around my arms and body completely. I was falling in the standing up position at about



100mph," said Mr Dolan, 39, whose accident happened three weeks ago.

Speaking from his bed in the spinal injuries unit at Pinderfields General Hospital, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, yesterday, he said: "All I could do was watch the ground as it got closer and closer. I didn't have time to think about anything else. I wasn't scared at all. I just gave

into the situation and let it happen. As I fell to within a few yards of the ground, I tensed up and shut my eyes tightly. I didn't feel any pain when I hit the ground. I just blacked out."

He puts his survival down to hitting a sloping surface. "I bounced up again and rolled downwards into a small mound of snow. I would have gone 'splat' if I'd landed on a

flat surface, my body would have been smashed to pieces." He ended up in the recovery position used by paramedics when dealing with accident victims. "It was pure luck that I ended up rolling to a halt like that. I could easily have choked to death on blood or vomit if I'd ended up on my back. It was against all the odds that I survived. There were rocks all over and I was lucky to miss them all."

The former Army physical training instructor from Queensbury, near Bradford, West Yorkshire, who is a member of the Yorkshire Dales Hang-gliding and Paragliding Club, was also wearing a special backplate made of Kevlar, the material used in bullet-proof vests.

Mr Dolan was airlifted to hospital in Treviso, where surgeons inserted metal plates in his spine and took bone grafts from his pelvis.

Yahya Ahmed, consultant at Pinderfields, said: "We hope to begin active physiotherapy in the next few weeks to get him back walking again. He's very lucky to have the chance of walking, given the dreadful nature of his injuries."



Mr Dolan and his wife Liz after the accident. "I try not to think about how close I came to losing him," she said

Mr Dolan said: "I'm definitely the luckiest person on Earth. I couldn't wish for anything more than to be alive."

His wife Liz, 31, added: "I'm just thankful that he's alive. I try not to think about how close I came to losing him."

Dean Crosby, a former British champion and a fellow club member, said: "Pat is very lucky to be alive considering the height he fell from and the speed of his descent. An accident like that is extremely rare, almost a one-off. I

wouldn't say that paragliding is any more dangerous than any other sport. There is always an amount of danger which you can reduce by proper training. Perhaps we need more training abroad where the conditions are far worse."

Mr Dolan's escape is one of the more remarkable in recent years. In March 1995, Penny Roberts of Silsden, West Yorkshire, an experienced parachutist, hit a concrete runway in Florida at 50mph after her

main and reserve chutes tangled on a 13,500ft jump. She suffered several broken bones and was paralysed below the waist.

In April 1994, Des Moloney, 28, of Chobham, Surrey, fell 3,000ft from a plane being flown by his brother when his parachute ripped and opened only partially. He was dazed but suffered only cuts, bruises and whiplash when he landed on a grass verge near Sainsbury's in Colchester, Essex. Not too stunned to play

the wag, he told his brother: "Reports of my death are premature."

A 3ft-deep duck pond saved a New Zealand skydiver, Klint Freemantle, 22, who plunged 3,000ft in 1993 when both his parachutes failed to open. Mr Freemantle, after splashing down virtually without a scratch, said: "The first thing I did was stand up and shout 'Yes!'"

After his own near miss, Mr Dolan said he intended to take up gliding as a safer pastime.



From the glory days of TV's *Come Dancing*: Victor Sylvester takes the floor with Sylvia Birch in 1955

## BBC pirouette saves last tango in Bournemouth

By RUTH GLEDHILL

THE sequin and sunlamp industries are safe. The determined smiles of ballroom dancers will be seen once more. The BBC has reprieved *Come Dancing*.

Britain's longest-running television show will come back for a 47th year in the autumn, after a deluge of letters and petitions followed the news that TV executives had lined it up for the axe.

In its glory days, the show has been hosted by a series of famous broadcasters, but ratings had fallen from 10 million two decades ago to 2.8 million last year. One BBC management source was quoted as saying: "People here feel that it has had its day. It has become a bit of a national joke rather than a national institution."

Dancers were already reeling from the shock of losing televised coverage of the British championships last year and blamed the low audience on the show's scheduling at 11.35 on Monday nights. Eric Morley, former head of the Mecca leisure empire, who has been associated with *Come Dancing* since he organised the original competition, said the show would go on again "thanks to pressure from the British public".

Writing in the latest *Dance News*, the dance competition world's weekly newspaper, he urges young supporters to attend recordings of the series at Bournemouth's international centre in May: "It is important that viewers do not get the impression that supporters of dance are all older people."

The ballroom show, first broadcast from the Ritz ballroom in Manchester in 1949, will be fronted by former

*Generation Game* hostess Rosemarie Ford, who is on her fourth series, and will be screened in September.

Ms Ford is following a line which began with the original presenter, Peter Dinklage — who moved up the ladder into BBC management — and has included Peter West (1959-72), Terry Wogan (1973-79) and Angela Rippon (1987-92), along with career stages for Michael Aspel, Judith Chalmers and David Jacobs.

The new series will be in a different format, with team matches between "modern" couples dancing waltz, foxtrot, tango and quickstep, and "Latin" couples dancing rumba, cha cha, samba, jive and paso doble. There will also be a formation dance team competition, and for the first time an individual award for winning couples undefeated in their team events, even where their team lost.

Teams from Germany, Sweden and Holland will be flown over and some of Britain's top professionals, such as Donnie Burns and Gaynor Fairweather, the world latin champions, will give demonstrations.

John Leach, associate editor of *Dance News*, said: "It is very good news for dancing generally. There was an outcry when it came off."

Bill Irvine, who teaches at south London's Starlight studio — and won 13 world professional titles with his wife Bobbie — has been involved with *Come Dancing* for 40 years, chiefly as a judge. He said: "It is wonderful that it will be shown again. The BBC moved it to the later time and it lost viewing figures and then when it lost viewing figures they decided to take it off."

Simon Betts, producer and director of the programme for ten years, said: "We will have the best amateur dancers in Europe competing."

He said the BBC had received "a tremendous amount of letters from all ages" and added: "There was talk of dropping *Come Dancing* but Alan Yentob, controller of BBC1, has kept faith with the dance community by bringing it back."

"We are very pleased. British dancers are the best in the world, so it is good that they are back and will be able to strut their stuff again on *Come Dancing*."

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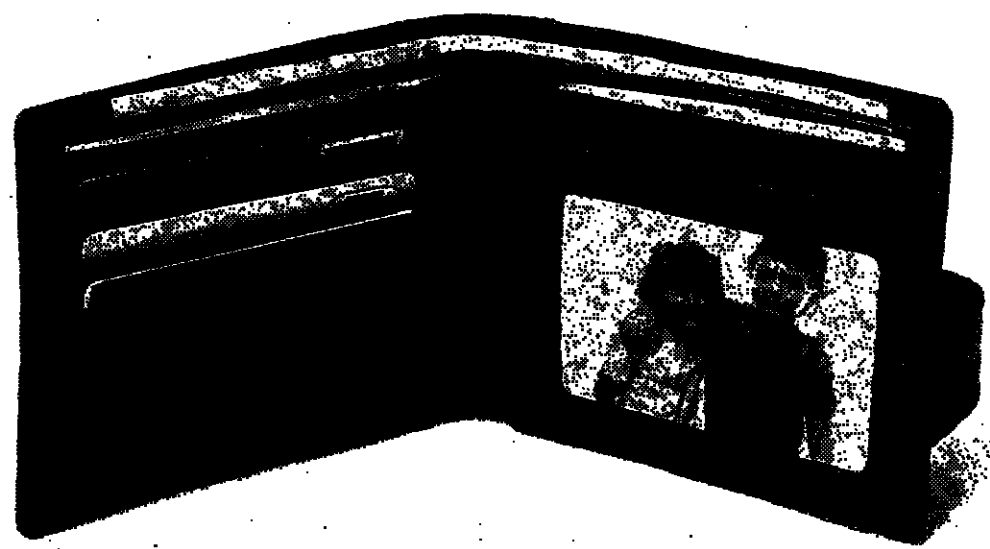
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Inquest verdict of accidental death on terrorist who was 'author of his own misfortune'

## Bus bomber was plotting as the IRA talked peace

By ADRIAN LEE

AN IRA terrorist who died when the bomb he was carrying exploded prematurely on a London bus had already planned a similar device and was hiding enough equipment to wage a concerted campaign on mainland Britain.

Edward O'Brien had been active in England for at least 18 months and had been stockpiling explosives and selecting his targets throughout the IRA ceasefire.

His inquest was told yesterday that O'Brien, 21, from Gorey, County Wexford, was an experienced terrorist who had also planted a bomb in a telephone kiosk in the West End of London three days before he was killed. It was discovered and defused.

Dr Paul Knapman, the

Westminster Coroner, said: "One would extend sympathy to his family, but it is clear that while embarking on this potentially murderous crime, he was the author of his own misfortune." He recorded a verdict of accidental death.

After O'Brien's death, police found Semtex, timers, detonators and a prepared bomb at his bedsit in south London. The equipment was typical of that used by the IRA.

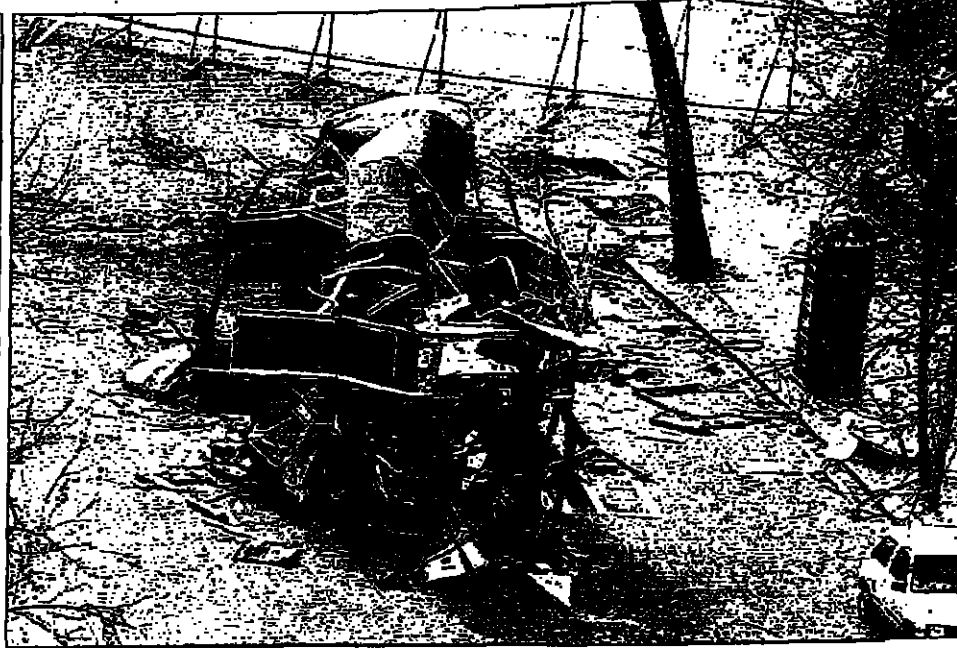
"It was a complete find of bomb-making equipment," Detective Superintendent William Emerton, of the Metropolitan Police's anti-terrorist branch, said. "It could have sustained a significant bombing attack on the citizens of London."

He said that as early as August 1994, O'Brien was acting as an agent of the IRA

on the mainland. From October 1995, he was preparing a stockpile of Semtex, timers, detonators, guns and ammunition. He was drawing up his plans during the ceasefire and President Clinton's visit to Belfast and Dublin last November and December.

It is clear that at the time Edward O'Brien was collecting his murderous equipment and planning his criminal activities, Mr Emerton said, adding that it was duplicitous for the IRA to have planned atrocities during the ceasefire.

O'Brien died at about 10.30pm on February 19 as he stood, carrying his bomb in a sports bag, at the foot of the stairs on a number 171 bus in the Aldwych. Dr Iain West, a Home Office pathologist, said O'Brien's legs were blown off by the explosion and he suf-



Edward O'Brien had been stockpiling equipment for 18 months when he blew up himself and a London bus. Among the injured was Paris Valentine, a passenger who suffered only perforated eardrums and minor cuts. It was, said the coroner, a remarkable escape

fered "blast lung", the force of the bomb ripping his lungs to shreds. He would have died almost instantly. The explosion also injured the driver and two passengers. There had been 37 people on the bus at various times as it travelled from south London to Holborn.

Detective Superintendent Emerton said a Walther 9mm pistol, bearing O'Brien's fin-

gerprints, was found in the debris. A Jaguar sports bag, recovered from the dead man's flat in Lewisham, was one of two bought at the same time from Argos in Calford, south London. The first bag had been used to conceal the bomb in the telephone kiosk in Charing Cross Road three days earlier. Warnings about the device, including one call to Buckingham Palace, were

imprecise but a diligent member of the public had found it. Mr Emerton said O'Brien was born in Dublin and moved to Co Wexford with his family. He was once employed as a baker but had been living in London since August 1994 and was integrated into the local community, playing for a pub football team and drinking regularly at clubs and pubs. He worked fulltime as a

labourer. Commander John Grieve, head of the terrorist branch, said: "I am convinced he was an active, committed, fairly experienced terrorist who had been on the mainland since at least August 1994. He had been involved in Provisional IRA activity from then and through the ceasefire."

Allen Fereday, a scientific officer at a forensic explosives laboratory, told the inquest at Westminster Coroner's Court how he had analysed the bomb-making equipment found at O'Brien's bedsit. It consisted of 15 kg of Semtex explosive in four blocks; 16 one-hour timer units; four three-hour units; one incendiary device with a ten-hour timer and four electronic detonators. It was, he said, typical of the equipment used in IRA devices.

Mr Fereday said the explosion caught O'Brien at knee level, consistent with him carrying the bomb in a hold-all. There were a number of possible reasons for the premature explosion. The most likely were that the device had been incorrectly armed; poorly constructed, possibly causing a short-circuit; or had a faulty mechanism.

Less likely was that the bomber had made a timing miscalculation or that he had simply stumbled. It was possible that interference from an electrical device, such as a personal stereo or a mobile telephone, had triggered the device.

The coroner praised bystanders who went to the aid of the casualties at a scene of "devastation and enormous disruption".

Paris Valentine, a solicitor who was travelling on the bus, said: "I heard a loud thud. I was listening to my Walkman then I heard a huge piercing sound going through my mind and everything became still. I felt the bus grind to a halt and I was in complete darkness with sparks of light. I was losing consciousness but willed myself to stand up and get out of the bus." He suffered a perforated eardrum and

minor cuts but was otherwise unhurt. The coroner described his escape as "quite remarkable".

Also injured was the bus driver, Bob Newitt, 49, of New Cross, London, who is deaf as a result of his injuries, and Rolf Hobart, 38, of Torquay, who suffered facial injuries. Another injured passenger, Brendan Woolhead, from Dublin, was initially a police suspect but had no connection with the explosion. He has total amnesia about what happened that night.

An off-duty policeman, PC Miles Manning, described an "almighty explosion" and what appeared to be a "bite mark" missing from the centre of the bus. "It was one of the loudest noises I have ever heard and there was an orange flash. I was thrown forwards a few yards."

He ran to help and, fearing a secondary blast, took out his warrant card and warned rescuers to stand back. A taxi driver, an American tourist and a solicitor, who had been drinking in a pub, all tried to help. They are to be cited by police for bravery awards.

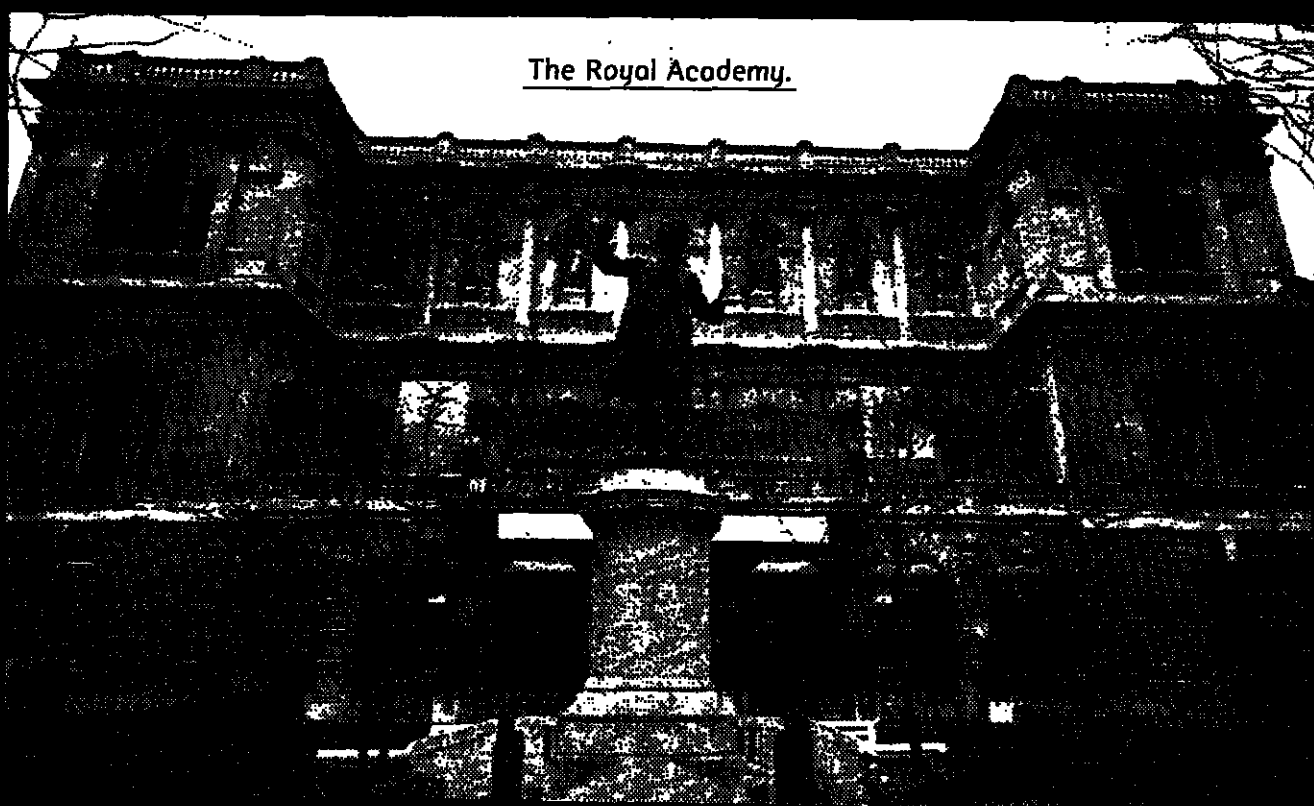
The coroner said: "We have heard a story of ordinary people in London who showed their inner resources in response to such outrages."



PC Manning feared a second explosion

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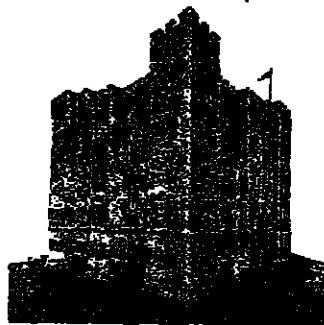


THIS August Bank Holiday, Dover Castle sees a return to one of the most important dates in our nation's history. The eve of D-Day, 1944. Hundreds of British servicemen, German prisoners of war and military vehicles will be re-enacting the movements that were to signal the beginning of the end of the war as the allied forces prepared to land in Normandy. The command room will be functioning at full speed, dispatches will be arriving, 25lb guns will be loaded, lookout stations will be manned. It'll be just like Dover Castle was in the old days. A frightening place to be. Only this time, your chances of returning home safely, you'll be pleased to learn, are 100%.



THE Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment have had rather an eventful few centuries. Since 1572, when a Tudor company first travelled across the Channel to help the Dutch fight against Spain, they've served in the Napoleonic War, the Crimean War, the Boer War, the First World War. The list goes on. As does the number of medals they've received. 56 Victoria Crosses, no less. With the use of special effects and stunning sets, we've recreated life on board a Regiment ship. As you walk through lifelike displays, you'll get some idea of what it was like to be a marine three centuries ago. You will also experience the atmosphere of WWI trenches and see the very ball that was kicked into no-man's-land by the East Surreys.

Although a fortified settlement since the Iron Age, Dover Castle has only been in its existent form since the late 12th century. It was in 1179 when Henry II's builder, Maurice the Engineer, began the construction of the large rectangular Keep which is the magnificent centrepiece of the castle. The rough masonry walls measure between 5.2 and 6.4 metres in thickness. However, impenetrability wasn't the only prerequisite. The Keep was, after all, to be home to the King on occasion. Hence the splendid royal apartments on the upper storey. Encircled by a mural gallery and featuring elaborately decorated window embrasures, they provide a more grandiose contrast to the rooms beneath. Even the Chapel upstairs is considerably larger and more ornate than its lower equivalent.



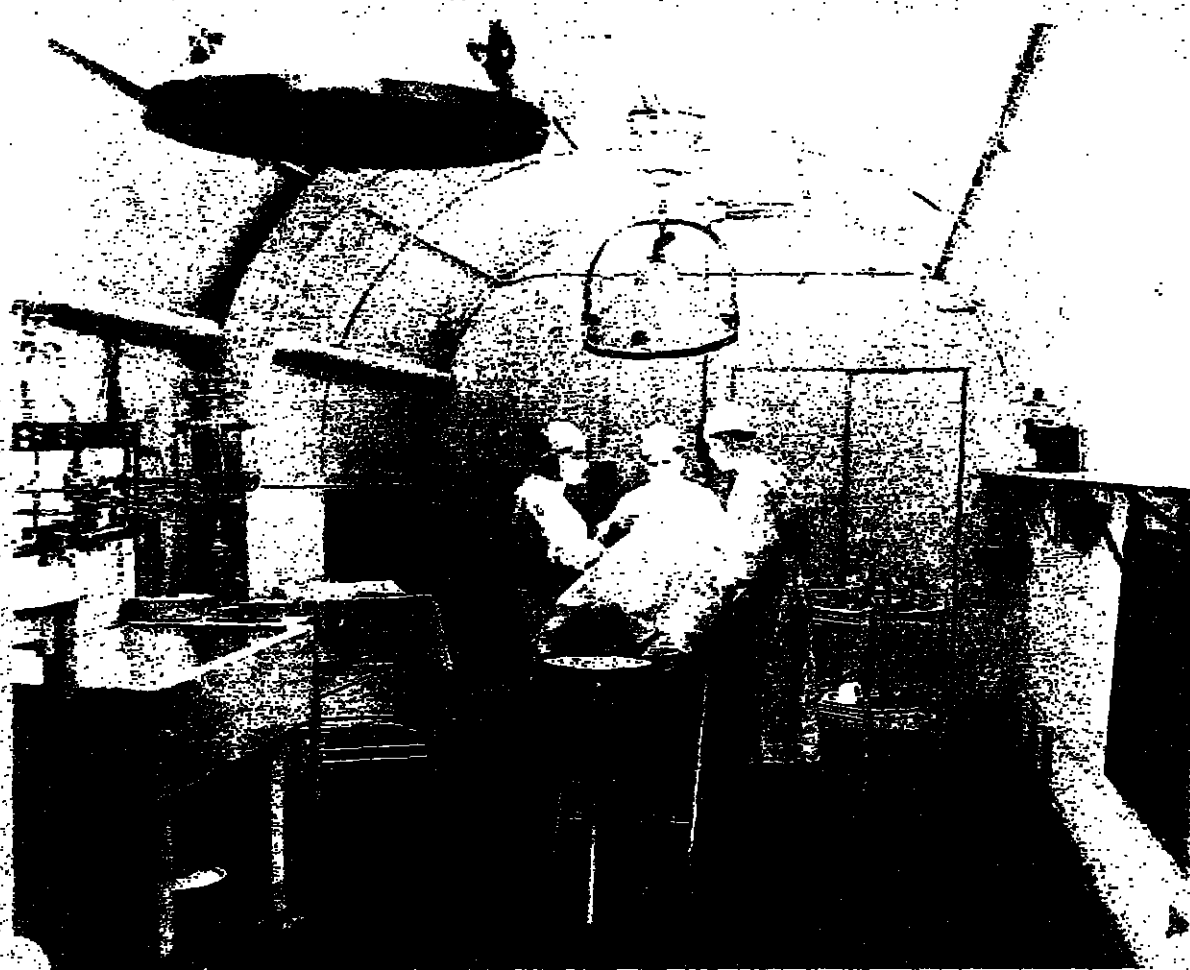
MANY people know that Desmond Llewellyn played the part of Q in the Bond movies. Fewer people, perhaps, are aware of the fact that Q was playing the part of one CHARLES FRASER-SMITH: the man who was the inspiration for Fleming's shrewd inventor. Based within the Clothing Department of the Ministry of Supply, Fraser-Smith appeared to be nothing more than an unremarkable civil servant. But he was actually the mastermind in one of Britain's most secret projects, his inventions playing a major part in the Second World War victory. The *Live and Let Spy* exhibition at Dover Castle takes you into the world of the secret agent. You'll see a number of Fraser-Smith's devices, like the shaving brush that carried some photographic film of German installations. The seemingly innocuous jacket button, in reality a tiny compass.



And the playing card with, believe it or not, a map hidden inside it. There's even an interactive section which determines whether you've got exactly what it takes in order to become a leading secret agent.

# IN

## THE SECOND WORLD WAR, DOVER CASTLE WAS THE SCENE OF MANY TOP SECRET OPERATIONS. THE ONE ON SAM FLETCHER'S LEFT LEG, FOR INSTANCE.



The Underground Hospital at Dover Castle.



BURIED in the white cliffs of Dover, beneath the most celebrated major fortress in Britain's history, are The Secret Wartime Tunnels. Open to the public since 1990, having come off the original official secrets list four years earlier, they were home to the Underground Hospital. This hospital, which has been reconstructed in authentic detail gives you some insight into the experiences of Second World War casualties. A vast amount of the original

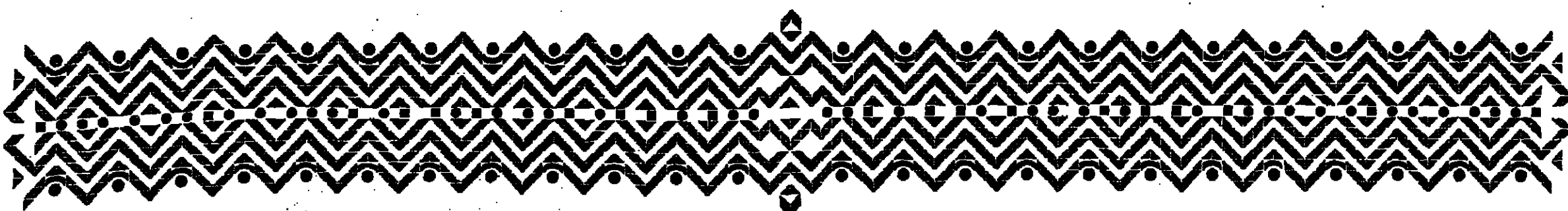
furnishings and equipment have been collected and reinstalled. Home Front propaganda lines the walls, including the famous 'Careless Talk Costs Lives' poster. 1940's cigarette packets, old newspapers and a half-played game of draughts rest on tables. The wartime flavour is enhanced by the soundtrack which plays on your guided tour of the Tunnels. You'll hear the conversations of hospital staff and the sound of air raids and bombings. There's even that distinctive hospital smell to greet you as you enter the operating theatre, followed by the nasal 'delight' of boiled cabbage emanating from the kitchens.

**D**URING World War II, when many British women and children found refuge in London's tube stations, many British soldiers were hiding in an underground system too: *The Secret Wartime Tunnels* beneath Dover Castle. A maze of passages, offices and hospital dormitories which served as a military base for Churchill's troops. It was here that one Vice-Admiral Ramsay masterminded the evacuation of Dunkirk. And here that hundreds of casualties of war received the finest of medical attention. You can experience their sights, sounds and even smells at Dover Castle. To find out more information on English Heritage and our role in preserving the nation's significant buildings, please call 0171 973 3434 or visit any one of our 400 sites.



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# Ulster elections only delay choices that cannot be avoided

President Bill Clinton has turned into an increasingly supportive ally of John Major on Northern Ireland. This surfaced in an improbable way during Mr Clinton's meeting with Tony Blair at the White House last Friday. When the President said that Mr Blair had acted in a "very statesmanlike" way over Northern Ireland, he has not only giving the Labour leader a public boost, but he was also being helpful to Mr Major.

Some of Mr Clinton's advisers had been concerned that Labour might seek to exploit the Government's vulnerability by allying with

the Unionists over an amendment to the Bill, published yesterday, for elections on May 30. But Mr Blair assured the president that, however much he wanted to bring down the Tories, there was no way that Labour would indulge in such wrecking tactics over Northern Ireland. Mr Clinton was relieved.

After the differences of a year ago between London and Washington over the treatment of Gerry Adams, there is now a much closer understanding over Northern Ireland. This partly follows a proposal made to Mr Clinton by Sir John Kerr, the British Ambassador in Washington, shortly after his arrival

## RIDDELL ON POLITICS

last summer. He suggested that, having met Mr Adams, the president should meet all those who receive more votes than Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland elections. Mr Clinton agreed. He has accordingly met David Trimble twice and Ian Paisley once. This, coupled with advice from the American Embassy in London, has helped to change attitudes among Mr Clinton's advisers — though Vice-President Al Gore has always sought to ensure that the Unionist case is heard. The

end of the IRA ceasefire has also put some Washington supporters of Mr Adams on the defensive.

Mr Clinton was persuaded that the British suggestion of elections was a necessary step to ensure that the Unionists participate in the all-party negotiations on June 10, despite the misgivings of the Dublin Government and opposition of the SDLP. He has appealed to all parties to become involved.

Yesterday's Bill and the accompanying paper on ground rules for the talks are intended to keep open all options by offering wide reassurance. The elections will both provide delegates from whom participants in the all-party talks can

be chosen and create a deliberative forum, in effect a talking shop with no real powers. The Bill provides that referendums may, with parliamentary approval, be held on any matter relating to Northern Ireland. The Government is still not persuaded of the case for a referendum on the renunciation of violence, as urged by John Hume. But the door has not been closed. Sinn Féin can, and probably will, participate in the elections, but the Government paper reiterates that their participation in negotiations "requires the unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire of August

1994". While the IRA decision on a ceasefire is the main uncertainty ahead of June 10, several other questions remain unresolved. Who, for example, will be the "independent chairperson" handling the sensitive strand two discussions on relationships within the island of Ireland? There are suggestions that Senator George Mitchell is willing to become involved again.

The familiar question of decommissioning of arms will also have to be addressed at the start of the talks. The announcement of elections masked the decision to drop the previous "Washington three" precondition that decommissioning

must start. But this only put off a decision. Everything now is aimed at getting the talks going with all parties involved. Sinn Féin will also have to decide whether it accepts the Mitchell Commission's insistence on an absolute commitment to democracy and non-violence. These choices cannot be avoided indefinitely. On June 10, or soon afterwards, the London and Dublin Governments, and the Clinton Administration, will have to face up to the incompatibility of the aims and attitudes of the main participants.

PETER RIDDELL

## Mandelson tours Far East courtesy of Barclays Bank

By Andrew Pierce and Patricia Tehan

BARCLAYS BANK financed a ten-day trip to South-East Asia by Peter Mandelson, one of Tony Blair's closest allies, to reassure companies in the region that their investments in Britain would be safe under new Labour.

The trip, the first the bank has sponsored for an individual MP, came in the same week that BZW, Barclays' investment bank, hosted a reception for the Labour leader during his visit to New York. But Mr Mandelson, MP for Hartlepool, had given a different emphasis to the trip before he went away. He told his local newspaper that he was flying east to try to generate more investment from South-East Asia in Hartlepool, where unemployment is almost twice the national average.

His explanation mystified Barclays, which is paying the estimated £6,000 bill for the trip to Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore.

A spokeswoman for Barclays, the one-time *hère* of the Labour Left because of its investment in

South Africa during the apartheid era, said: "The trip had nothing to do with Hartlepool. The only connection we have with Hartlepool is a branch in the High Street."

Before he left for South-East Asia, at the start of the Easter recess, Mr Mandelson told the *Hartlepool Mail*: "We must step up our efforts to promote the town and I am pleased to announce that during Easter I am travelling to Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore to beat the drum for investment in Hartlepool."

Far from paying Mr Mandelson's expenses to extol the virtues of Hartlepool, the bank had invited him to act as an unofficial ambassador for Tony Blair. Andrew MacThomas, Barclays head of public affairs, said in a letter to the MP that the purpose was: "To discuss trade and investment under a Labour government with particular reference to companies with direct interests in Britain."

In the letter, dated March 29, Mr MacThomas said that Barclays agreed to the visit as a number of its customers in

the Far East could be affected by a potential change of government in Britain.

Barclays declined to say who had issued the invitation to Mr Mandelson, whose frontbench portfolio is the Civil Service not inward investment. Last night the bank said that the visit was part of a programme of contact with politicians.

Martin Taylor, the Eton-educated chief executive of Barclays, is an acquaintance of Mr Blair. He approved the visit, which was organised by BZW, Derek Scott, a BZW economist and part-time adviser to Mr Blair, is believed to have helped to organise Mr Blair's Wall Street gathering.

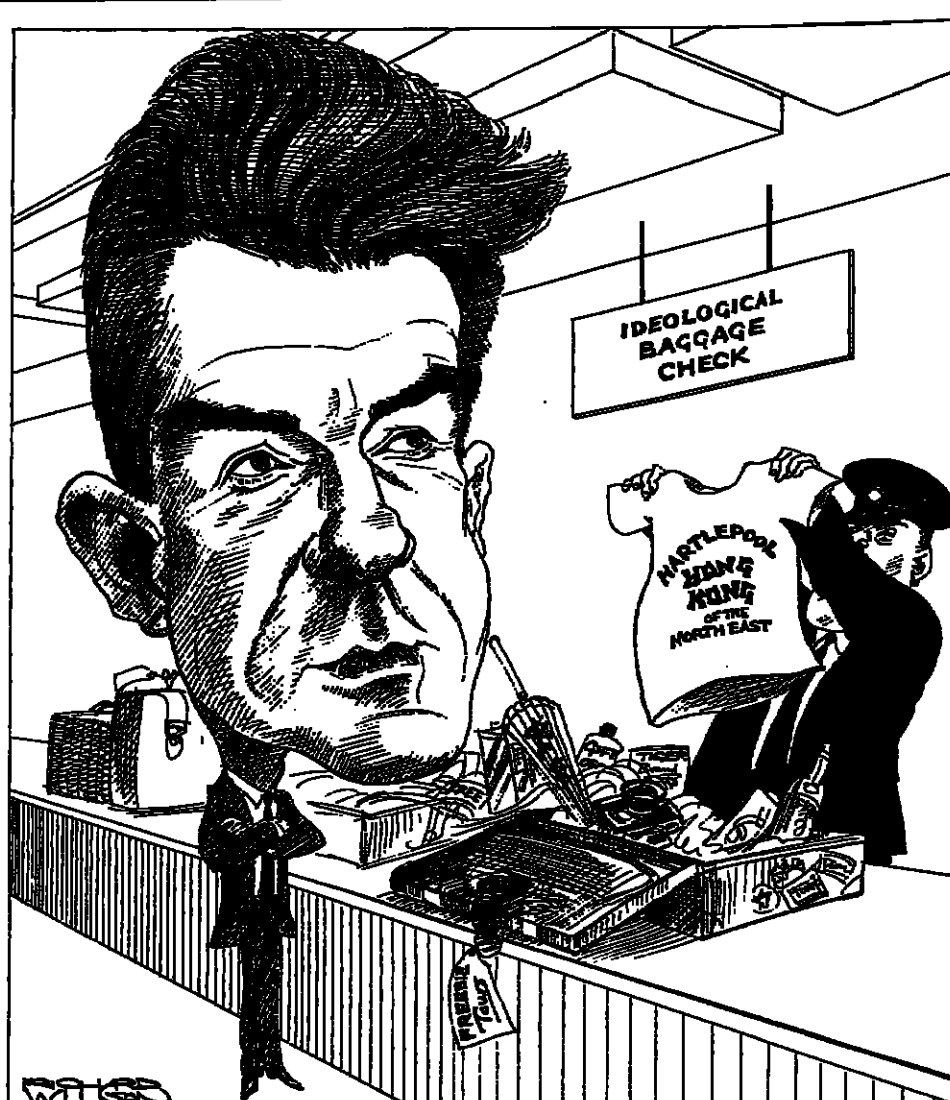
Mr Mandelson flew from London to Tokyo on April 6, staying at the Imperial Hotel. He went on to Seoul on April 9, staying at the Hotel Shilla, visiting Hyundai and Daewoo. Mr Mandelson reached Hong Kong on Thursday April 11, staying at the Conrad Hotel, leaving on April 14 for Singapore. He arrived back in London yesterday.

In the Register of MPs' interests Mr Mandelson declares that he is parliamentary adviser to the Association of Civil Servants. He will have to log his trip in the next register.

The bank spokeswoman said the visit had been arranged because Barclays had many customers there who wanted to know about investment prospects under a Labour government. "It is the first time we have done it," she said. "We do not have MPs as consultants or advisers."

Mr Mandelson had been chosen because customers had exacting questions. "We wanted to send someone who could answer them." "The final cost was not yet known because Mr Mandelson had not submitted his expenses."

Mr Mandelson said in a prepared statement that the knowledge he had gained about the Asian economic miracle had been enormously valuable. "It was a real eye-opener. I was particularly pleased to reassure potential investors in Britain about the excellent business prospects in Britain under a Labour government."



## Sinn Féin warned over late ceasefire

By Arthur Leathley, Political Correspondent

SINN FEIN leaders were told last night that they may be excluded from the forthcoming all-party talks even if the IRA declares a ceasefire.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, increased pressure on the IRA to end violence now by saying that a last-minute ceasefire might be too late. Sinn Féin has been told that it will be excluded from talks starting on June 10 unless an "unequivocal restoration" of the ceasefire is announced, although it can stand in the May 30 elections to the peace forum.

Unionists are worried that Sinn Féin could enter the talks if a ceasefire is announced only days before June 10. However, Sir Patrick emphasised last night that the announcement needed to be made soon, saying: "It would be increasingly hard to persuade participants that this was unequivocal the closer to the 'off' it is declared."

Sir Patrick, who was announcing legislation to set up the talks and elections to the peace forum, was optimistic that all parties would join. "I think there are more sensible grounds for being hopeful than for a very long time."

A Bill will be rushed through Parliament by next week to enable the election of 110 representatives to the forum, from which negotiators will be selected for the talks. Sinn Féin made no initial response to the draft Bill.

### IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to health ministers and the Prime Minister; private notices questions on Acts; statements on BSE and Commons business; Broadbanding Bill, second reading; Education (Student Loans) Bill, second reading; proposed widening of M1; in the Lords: debate including risk stock conversion and management; Defamation Bill, report.

IN THE COMMONS: backbench debates; trade and industry questions; rail privatisation; in the Lords: policies to cut unemployment; road traffic; Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, committee; Disabled Persons and Carers (Short-Term Care) Bill, second reading.

## Labour accused of media 'sycophancy'

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY accused Labour of "sycophantic devotion" to large media groups yesterday after it sought to relax planned restrictions on newspapers' holdings in broadcasting companies (James Landale writes).

The Broadcasting Bill, which came up for its second reading in the Commons, would allow newspaper groups with less than 20 per cent of the national market to bid for ITV licences. The limit is designed to prevent any one group dominating the market.

However, Labour said that the figure was arbitrary and unreasonable because it

would prevent the left-leaning Mirror Group newspapers from holding a licence. Jack Cunningham, the Shadow National Heritage Secretary, argued for a 25 per cent limit.

Mrs Bottomley accused Labour of trying to rig the regulations and putting vested interests above those of the viewers and readers. "The Labour Party has lurched from paranoid terror of large media groups to sycophantic devotion towards them," she said. "The Government would be 'relentless in exposing the cosy deals that Labour have dreamt up to please their friends'."

## Worried Tories urge Major to talk with Goldsmith

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

SENIOR Tories urged John Major yesterday to authorise talks with Sir James Goldsmith on an agreement that would persuade him to withdraw his threat to field 600 pro-referendum candidates at the general election.

They say that unless the Government does a deal with Sir James his Referendum Party will take enough votes to make defeat certain. They want Mr Major to look sympathetically at the billionaire financier's call for all-party talks on a possible

referendum on Britain's relations with Europe.

Senior Tories are citing the 1,272 votes secured by the UK Independence Party in last week's Staffordshire South East by-election. They say that if that were repeated elsewhere the Tory majorities in more than 20 seats would be wiped out.

Yesterday Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare, a former deputy party chairman and a confidant of Mr Major, became the first leading Tory to go public with a call for "dialogue" with Sir James, although he was reflecting the views of some Tory MPs worried that the Referendum Party could tip the balance against them at the election. They have been persuaded not to speak out for fear of raising the new party's profile.

Lord Archer said that the Tory party leadership should have a "dialogue" with Sir James. He told *The Times*: "In spite of the excellent deal

done by John Major at Maastricht, the anti-Maastricht candidate at South East Staffordshire still got 1,270 votes. Nobody believes they were Labour people who were unhappy with Mr Blair. It was an anti-government vote."

"James Goldsmith has £20 million to spend and is a charismatic figure. What he is going to achieve is letting in a Labour government that will eventually sign up to a social chapter and a federalist Europe. He is letting in Tony Blair, a man we believe to be committed to a single currency. We should be talking to him and asking him if he understands what he is doing."

He added: "We should remember what happened in the 1992 presidential election in America. President Bush did not want to talk to Ross Perot. He ended up with a big share of the vote and helped to remove Mr Bush from the White House."

## NHS criticised over £100m computers

A SCHEME to introduce computers in NHS hospitals to improve patient services has cost more than £100 million and failed to provide the expected benefits (Nigel Williamson writes).

A highly critical report from a public spending watchdog says that eight years after the start of the scheme, only 13 of the 260 acute NHS hospitals have integrated computer systems providing up-to-the-minute information on the results of medical tests, waiting list and other vital data. The NHS Executive had intended all hospitals to be running the system by April

1995. However, the National Audit Office found that pilot schemes had been plagued by delays and a failure to make sufficient savings. Particular problems had occurred at Nottingham, Kidderminster and Darlington hospitals.

Alan Langlands, the NHS chief executive, is certain to face tough questioning from the Public Accounts Committee over the report next month. MPs will want to know why by last year the schemes had only achieved cost savings of £3.3 million and why the NHS Executive has still not completed its own evaluation of the project.

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## At a Service Near You

Ruth Gledhill, religious affairs correspondent of *The Times*, visited nearly 200 places of worship for the series in Weekend. At your service, and this book is a collection of 63 of those engaging articles.

Not quite the ecclesiastical equivalent of *The Good Pub Guide*, but Gledhill does assess the quality of the leadership, architecture, sermon, music, liturgy, after-service care and spiritual high at the churches she visits.

She describes the atmosphere, the sort of people who attend, the style of the worship, the quality of preaching and anything that particularly strikes her, even the coffee.

As the daughter of an Anglican clergyman, Gledhill has been attending church regularly since childhood and the experience of visiting so many has had an impact on her own faith.

"I began the series as a churchgoing Anglican with fairly traditional views," she says. "The experience has made me more liberal in belief and more open to

evangelical styles of worship, in particular the joy and movement that comes with some of the best spiritual songs."

Ruth believes churches are more than places of worship. They are also community centres in a world where neighbourhood communities are vanishing. They provide an oasis of peace in a noisy environment. The best churches preach faith as the foundation for true healing and happiness and impart to her the sense of God's presence.

At a Service Near You makes enjoyable reading. Anyone who wants to find out about a church in an area they are visiting, or simply curious about local churches, will find it extremely helpful.

Readers can get a copy of *At a Service Near You: British Churches - The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* for only £6.49 (normal price £7.99) including postage and packing and with an inserted book plate signed by the author.

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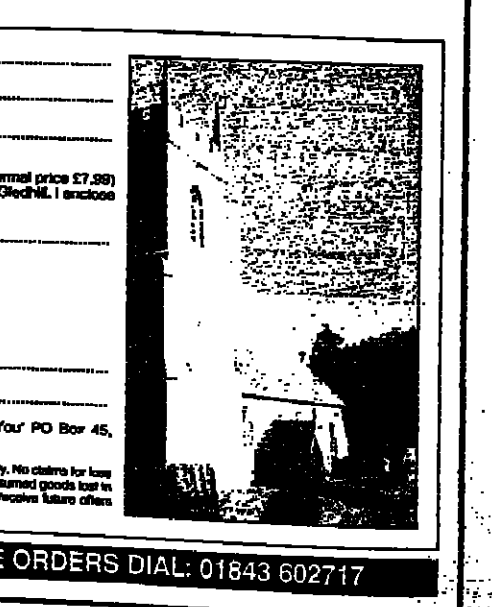
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# Doctors give hope of breakthrough in cancer therapy

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

A NEW weapon against cancer that could prove effective for many of the commonest forms of the disease has begun patient trials, scientists announced yesterday.

The treatment, based on blocking the growth of malignant cells instead of destroying them, has excited scientists who have spent 15 years developing it. It is being tested on lung cancer patients and, if successful, trials will be extended to other common cancers.

Researchers from the Imperial Cancer Research Fund described the start of tests on patients as a landmark. Professor John Smyth, director of the fund's clinical oncology unit at Western General Hospital, Edinburgh, said: "We can't avoid being excited by this. We believe the science is extremely strong and we are optimistic, but we are at the first stage. We desperately need entirely new approaches

if we are to make a major difference for patients with a number of different types of cancer, particularly the common cancers."

The treatment is being used first for sufferers of small-cell lung cancer, which accounts for a quarter of all cases of lung cancer and causes nearly 10,000 deaths a year in Britain.

Professor Smyth said there had been virtually no improvement in survival after lung cancer in the past decade despite the development of treatments to improve quality of life. Chemotherapy is highly effective in eradicating the cancer cells but the disease returns in more than 90 per cent of cases and the drugs do not work a second time. The new treatment would be used as a follow-up to initial chemotherapy to prevent the cancer cells re-growing.

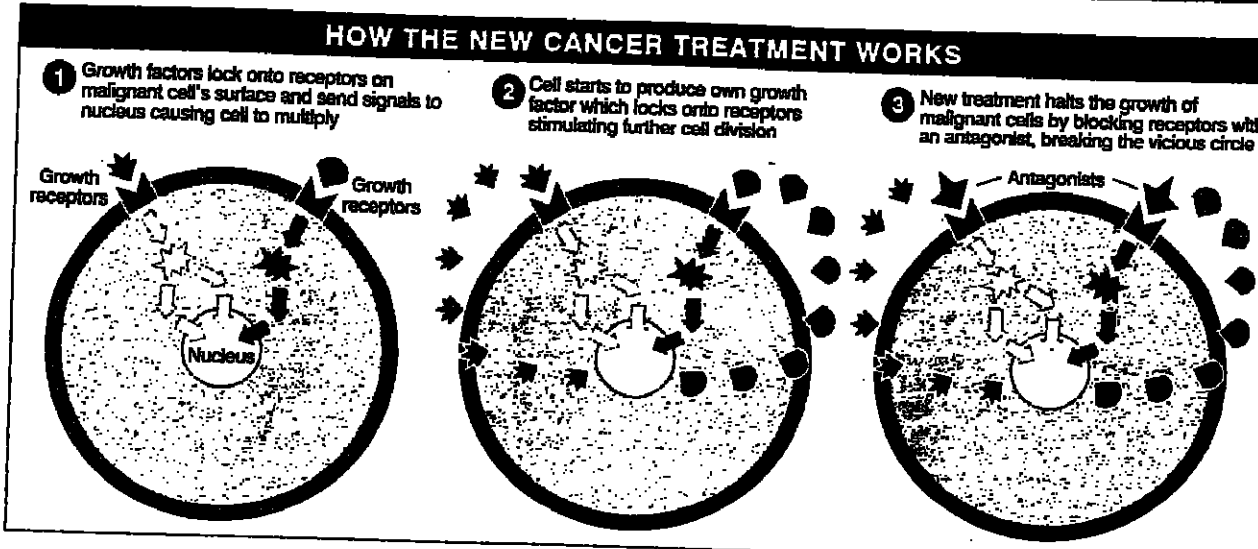
In small-cell lung cancer, the malignant cells produce

hormonal growth factors called neurotrophins which cause the cells to multiply out of control. They do this by locking on to receptors on the cell's surface and sending signals to the cell nucleus.

Work led by Dr Enrique Rozengurt at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's laboratory in London has shown that the receptors can be blocked with antagonists, which prevent the growth factors from working and stop multiplication of the cancer cells and the growth of the tumour.

Dr Rozengurt said: "We have identified a group of antagonists that can block every type of growth factor with a particular type of signal. The vicious circle is interrupted." An important question, however, is what effect the antagonists have on healthy cells.

The first clinical trials, which began in February,



involve a handful of patients and will determine how treatment with the best antagonist for lung cancer is tolerated and the optimum dose. Later trials will compare the new approach with existing treatments. It will be three to five years before scientists know whether it is effective. Laboratory studies suggest the same antagonist may be effective against cancer of the bowel and pancreas because the same family of growth factors may be involved.

Professor Smyth said: "There are many types of receptors on the surfaces of the cells of different types of cancer. There are also many types of growth factor. It may be possible to develop antagonists for them, too."

## Nutritionist says Chinese food is recipe for healthy breasts

WOMEN may be able to avoid breast cancer by eating Chinese food, scientists were told yesterday.

Soy protein used in oriental cooking contains chemical compounds that appear to mimic the action of the widely used breast cancer drug Tamoxifen.

Dr Helen Wiseman, a nutritionist at King's College London, said that may be why people in Japan and China have such low rates of breast, colon and prostate cancer. It could also explain why

people who consume large amounts of soy products have a low incidence of heart disease. Tamoxifen is also believed to prevent heart disease and osteoporosis.

Dr Wiseman suggested at a meeting of the Biochemical Society at Liverpool University that oriental food might help to protect some women against breast cancer.

Soya beans, soya milk and other soy products contain bioactive substances called isoflavonoids. Like Tamoxifen, they may stop the

female hormone oestrogen acting on the breast, where it can cause cancer.

Isoflavonoids are also potent antioxidants, which may be another reason why they protect against cancer and heart disease.

Dr Wiseman told the meeting that work has started on ways to enrich soya products to improve their health-giving properties. "If all goes well, women at risk of breast cancer, for example, could choose to eat these foods as a supplement to drugs."

### SATURDAY IN THE TIMES



Matthew Parris meets Ian McKellen

Mary Ann Sieghart on Gloria Steinem

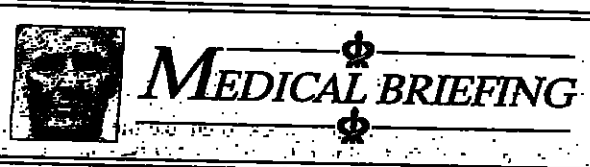
Anna Blundy joins New York's fact pack

Paul Heiney on home cooking



The Pembertons: Guy, Caroline and Simon (Hugh Dickson, Sara Coward and Peter Wingfield)

## Everyday story of a superdrug



Dr Thomas Stuttford

THE death of *The Archers'* Guy Pemberton, who owned the Ambridge estate, spoilt the weekend for listeners of the Radio 4 serial, particularly if they have had a cardiovascular disease. Mr Pemberton's death was slightly unusual, as more than half of those who die from a heart attack do so within the first 48 hours. The scriptwriters were not entirely misleading, for there is an appreciable increase in mortality over the first year.

Mr Pemberton's death leaves his widow Caroline and his son Simon with unresolved difficulties, but it also calls into question Dr Richard Locke's care. Had his patient been prescribed a regular daily dose of aspirin and, if he had, was anyone checking to see if he took it? Aspirin, unless there is a sound reason against its use, is recommended for prevention of a second heart attack.

Aspirin has been a wonder drug for nearly 100 years for which new uses are constantly being discovered. Despite its proven use in the prevention of a second heart attack, a recent survey carried out by Oxford University research workers and published in *General Practitioner* shows that only one in ten general practices is correctly recommending its routine use. This could be life-saving in many cases.

One example was an 18-year-old woman darts player who usually hit the 20s with easy grace. One evening, to

the amazement of her fans, she missed and missed again. It transpired that the woman had had a transient ischaemic attack (TIA), a tiny temporary stroke caused by a blood clot temporarily blocking an artery in her brain.

Further tests demonstrated that she had an abnormal clotting tendency, characterised by a positive antiphospholipid test, a simple and cheap blood test. This form of clotting disorder can be helped by the regular prescription of aspirin which reduces the likelihood of further TIAs or even a fatal stroke.

The darts player's condition was the same as that which Dr Graham Hughes of St Thomas's Hospital treats in some women who recurrently miscarry. In these women the placenta is damaged by small clots, the developing baby dies and the mother miscarries. Dr Hughes's research started with women who have lupus and who are also antiphospholipid positive, as are a small sub-group of lupus sufferers. In this group the successful pregnancy rate has, with the help of aspirin, been raised from 17 to 70 per cent.

Tests for the antiphospholipid factor are also important in younger patients who have unusual clotting tendencies, whether these have been demonstrated by early strokes, heart attacks, deep-vein thromboses or even recurrent migraine.

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# Hogg watches as prodigal son feeds subsidy to farmers

It was on April 3, began Agriculture Minister Douglas Hogg in his Statement to the Commons yesterday, that he had last made a statement to MPs on BSE. If Mr Hogg had followed the logic implied in this opening remark, he would have dropped the remaining six pages of his Statement and sat down without further ado.

He and Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, had made a series of reassuring Commons Statements before the Easter recess, and after

each the public panic over beef had grown. A fortnight's pause in these reassurances while MPs went on holiday and public alarm had subsided. Beef sales were now climbing back to their pre-reassurance level.

That this suggests some kind of link between ministerial reassurance and public alarm did not seem to occur to the younger Hogg, who ploughed on. Leaning on two sticks in the peers' gallery, the elder Hogg, Douglas's dad Quintin, watched anxiously.

The concern of Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone was understandable. The younger Hogg was there to announce big compensation payments to farmers whose cattle would have to be slaughtered: payments that could only add to the already vast level of public subsidy to agriculture.

Those of us who served in Parliament with Douglas before he realised that he might one day be Agriculture Minister remember him telling us the ruling wisdom in the

Hoggery way back in the 1950s, when the elder Hogg was First Lord of the Admiralty and the younger Hogg was a spotty teenager.

They were alarmed at the level of farm subsidy: so alarmed (the present Agriculture Minister used to tell us in the Smoking Room) that Thanksgiving Day at the

Hoggs's dinner table was dubbed by Hogg senior as subsidy Sunday.

One wonders whether Lord Hailsham, peering down at his son's grizzly competent performance at the dispatch box yesterday, cast his mind back nearly 50 years to the boy's mid-century grounding in agro-scepticism and

mourned his end-century prodigality. But this was not so much a case of the prodigal son feeding the hogs as the prodigal Hogg feeding the farmers.

It proved a jolly afternoon. If one believed that morning's newspapers, the session resumed with Tony Blair seething with anger at Clare Short's tax gaffe and John Major reeling in shock at a fresh blow delivered by the voters of Staffordshire SE to his premiership.

However, it resumed at Prime Minister's Questions with Mr Blair prancing confidently around and laughing off barbs about tax and Ms Short, while Mr Major, relaxed and jokey at the dispatch box, teased Paddy Ashdown and Mr Blair about their script-writers and swapped pleasantries with Peter Brooke (C, City of London and Westminster S) about cricket. Nothing at present seems to be getting under Mr Major's skin.

But there was one oddity. John Prescott has taken to

gesticulating wildly but silently as Major and Blair trade ripostes. Blair's sallies are accompanied by triumphant "Take that!" signals from Prescott, while Major's responses get a dismissive sweep of the burly ex-seaman's arms.

Not content with his new status among the middle classes, it seems Mr Prescott may be auditioning for the role of News Bunny on Live! TV. Perhaps a little more work is needed on the cuddle factor.

## Guarded welcome for BSE damages package

By MICHAEL HORNSBY  
AGRICULTURE  
CORRESPONDENT

### KEY POINTS OF THE PACKAGE

The £1 billion package largely consists of:  
■ £550 million to slaughter cattle more than 30 months old and prevent them entering the food chain. That includes up to £500 per cow to dairy farmers. Over a year, more than one million cattle may be destroyed.  
■ £80 million in top-up payments to owners of prime beef cattle over 30 months old.  
■ £80 million to abattoirs

and farmers who dispose of male calves in dairy herds soon after birth. These animals used to be exported to the Continent.  
■ £80 million to buy and destroy 40,000 tonnes of unsaleable beef that has piled up in warehouses.  
■ £30 million in emergency aid to abattoirs based on a payment of £8.75 for every head of cattle slaughtered in 1995-96.  
■ £118 million in aid to rendering plants.

Union, said: "Prompt payment of the compensation and the removal of devalued carcasses from cold stores will help the industry as it attempts to meet the renewed

public demand for beef." Tony Loud, who runs a 200-cow family dairy farm near Okehampton, Devon, said: "The compensation announced by Mr Hogg for old

milking cows is acceptable. But we are very worried by his reference to possible further selective culls of animals deemed to be susceptible to BSE. We do not see any need for that at all."

James Burnett keeps 1,100 of prime beef cattle near Newark, Nottinghamshire, which are all over the age of 30 months and face destruction. "The compensation for beef farmers like me is not as bad as I feared, but I could still face a loss of up to £250,000 over a full year," he said.

About £630 million of the aid package will be spent on the slaughter and disposal of cattle over 30 months old, which are considered to be at greater risk of being infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

There will be £110 million to help slaughterhouses. Some



Fair deal: Tony Loud, who runs a farm with his sons Martin, left, and Richard, said the package was acceptable

£80 million of this will be used to buy an estimated 40,000 tonnes of stockpiled beef which cannot be sold because it comes from older cattle or because there is no demand. The meat will probably have to be destroyed.

In addition, up to £80 million will be paid to abattoirs and farmers for the slaughter of male calves from dairy

herds immediately after birth. Nearly all these animals, up to 500,000 a year, were previously exported for the continental veal trade. They may now be made into pet food.

Rendering plants, which specialise in processing animal waste, will receive £118 million in aid. Mr Hogg said the plants had "substantial surplus capacity" and would be mainly responsible for treating and burning the waste material, offal and carcass meat that would no longer be allowed into the food chain.

According to an audit prepared for the Ministry of Agriculture by the accountant Coopers and Lybrand, 15,000 old cows and 6,000 beef animals over 30 months old will have to be slaughtered and destroyed each week, implying the destruction of about a million cattle in a year.

Old cows at the end of their productive life would have been slaughtered anyway. But instead of being turned into burgers and pies they will be destroyed. Farmers will get 86p a kilogram live weight, averaging nearly £500 per animal, roughly the market price they would have fetched before the BSE scare.

The European Union will pay 70 per cent of the cost of this compensation. But the Government will have to pay for the disposal of the carcasses. It will also pay a top-up payment of 25p a kilogram to owners of prime beef cattle over 30 months old, which are much more valuable than old dairy cows.

There are estimated to be 300,000 prime beef cattle on farms above this age limit which cannot now go into the food chain. To clear this

backlog alone in a year, the animals would have to be slaughtered and destroyed at a rate of about 6,000 a week.

Mr Hogg said he was looking at other ways of identifying individual cattle or groups of cattle more likely than others to develop BSE that could be culled selectively in addition to those over 30 months old. But there would be no question of killing whole herds just because they had had a few cases of BSE.

He said: "The models we are looking at involve limited numbers of individual animals — in the low tens of thousands — and do not provide for the slaughter of whole herds."

The proposals for a selective cull are due to be presented to European Union Agriculture Ministers at the end of this month. There is no chance of

the EU's worldwide ban on British beef being lifted until other member states have seen the proposals.

Mr Hogg said he was still discussing with the Environment Department the best and safest way of disposing of unwanted carcasses after they had been treated by rendering plants.

A legal challenge by the British Government over Europe's beef ban would be boosted by the Farm Commissioner's admission last week that the ban was needed to shore up the European beef industry (Frances Gibb writes). Lawyers say there is no doubt that the Commission has power to impose a ban but they believe it must be done on public health grounds.

The likelihood of success, some lawyers believe, is quite high: the grounds for legal challenge would be that the ban was disproportionate to the risk it sought to avoid. But as any legal action in the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg would be likely to take at least ten months from start to final court ruling, the chief benefit of lodging proceedings could be as a bargaining counter in any negotiations to have the ban lifted.

The families of eight people who died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease after treatment with a human growth hormone obtained from the pituitary glands of dead bodies launched a High Court claim yesterday for compensation. They allege that the Government and Medical Research Council were negligent in administering the treatment.



Hogg: said more culls might be necessary

Simon Jenkins, page 18  
Letters, page 19

## Diners dismiss beef offal warning as 'load of tripe'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRENCH gastronomy was reeling from another cruel blow yesterday after the Institute of National Consumers (INC) warned the public not to eat beef offal as fear of "mad cow" disease continued to permeate France.

Consumption of beef has dropped sharply here since the European ban on British beef, but the latest warning is a direct threat to some of France's most celebrated delicacies.

Le bifteck Aberdeen Angus has already disappeared from French menus and, if the public heeds the latest warning, ris de veau (sweetbread), cervelles (brains), andouillette (small tripe sausage) and amourettes (spinal bone marrow of calf or ox) will soon follow. Given the fact that the French blame British beef for the whole sorry affair, foie de veau anglaise (sauteed English calf's liver), which is usually served with boiled potatoes, could be the first to go.

"We advise consumers to avoid beef offal," Marie-Jeanne Husset, Editor of the consumer journal 60 Million Consommateurs, said, adding that the advisory would remain in place until the scientific community had reached a conclusion on the possible transmission of BSE to human beings.

Where the average British palate tends to balk at eating animal parts intended for thinking, digesting or excreting, virtually no organ is excluded from the French pot. Intestines, udders, liver, heart, lungs, brains and kidneys are all included in the

French definition of edible offal, or abats.

Last week, an English visitor to Paris ordered *museau de boeuf*, assuming it to be some particularly succulent steak. When informed that she was about to be presented with vinegared beef muzzles, she paled and abruptly changed her order.

Although the French refer to Britons as *Les Rosbifs*, France is the largest consumer of beef in Europe. But even before the current crisis, French meat consumption was beginning to wane. In 1979 the average French citizen consumed 25 kilos (55lb) of meat annually, but by last year the figure had dropped to 19 kilos (42lb).

The trend has been accelerating and, since last month's beef ban, more than half of all French restaurants have reported a drop in beef orders. In Paris, restaurateurs say consumption has halved while trade at vegetarian restaurants has jumped by a third. Popular restaurant chains such as Hippopotamus, the self-proclaimed "carnivore's heaven", have started serving "vegiburgers", the sort of dish that makes most French chefs reach for the smelling salts.

With traditional French cuisine already in crisis, it is facing intense competition from sushi, pasta and fast food — the advisory recommending the avoidance of offal will be a bitter pill to swallow for the nation's chefs, many of whom save their most extravagant and inventive recipes for offal dishes.

No country on Earth takes

its food as seriously as France. Open a certain French encyclopaedia at the word "food" and you will find the warning: "Do not read or watch television while eating. The secretion of digestive juices is stimulated by the sight, smell and feel of food ... many digestive problems are caused by paying insufficient attention to the food on the plate."

In a country where cooking is a combination of art, science and religion, beef offal is a central part of the repertoire of every great chef. The notion that it may be dangerous is little short of revolutionary. However, according to an unsentimental survey conducted yesterday, many French diners have reacted to the latest culinary caveat in the traditional way: by ignoring it.

At a restaurant near the Paris office of *The Times*, one of the regular customers was tucking into *tête de veau* (veal head) without an apparent care in the world. When asked what he thought of the new warning against eating offal, his reply was succinct: "Quelles bêtises", which can be translated only as "What a load of tripe".

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# Dutch MPs vote to give homosexuals marriage rights

By Charles Bremner

THE Dutch parliament voted yesterday to grant homosexual partners all the legal rights and duties of married couples, a step which would put the Netherlands far ahead of any other European state in the area of gay rights.

However, the coalition government, which had earlier backed the idea of legal same-sex marriage contracts, indicated that it was having second thoughts in the light of the damage this could inflict on the country's already tarnished image as the home of legal drugs.

Elisabeth Schmitz, Social Affairs Minister, told the parliament that the Cabinet would review its vote and report on its legislative plans in several weeks. The Government is not bound to implement the motion, but a political storm is certain if it ignores parliament's wishes.

The parliament is backing a draft law under which homosexuals who register their union with the authorities would benefit from all the social security and pension rights of heterosexual spouses. For tax purposes, gay couples would benefit from married status, including the rules of inheritance of property, pension and rights over children from any previous relationship. They would also be allowed to adopt children but not those of foreign birth.

For several years Dutch town halls have allowed homosexual couples to register their unions as "partner-

ship contracts" and liberal Protestant clergy have celebrated their bond at wedding-type ceremonies. Yesterday's vote, if enacted as law, would give gay partnership much greater legal status, going beyond that of same-sex couples in Denmark, Norway and Sweden who are given limited legal recognition after "registration".

The Government said its overall aim was to "adapt family law to the evolution of a society which, as well as marriage, recognises other forms of common life".

Some conservative and Catholic critics have suggested

that Queen Beatrix might withhold royal assent from a gay marriage Act although most commentators consider such a step implausible.

The Queen has made known in recent years that she has grown weary of her country's position as the fount of Europe's most controversial social legislation. The Netherlands is under especially heavy fire from France over its drugs policy. President Chirac has cited it as a main reason for his refusal to open French frontiers to passport-free travel despite France's commitment to do so under the Schengen treaty.

Gay rights groups said the proposed new law did not go far enough because it discriminated against homosexual couples who wanted to adopt children abroad.

European Union officials in Brussels said they were studying the implications of the possible Dutch law. Legal marriages in any member state are recognised by all the others.

In London Stonewall, the gay rights pressure group, said last night that Britain may be forced to recognise the legality of gay marriages as a result of the Dutch move.

Mark Watson, who is in charge of "partnerships" at the group, said: "This is an amazing decision. I predict that up to 1,000 gay couples may go to Holland to take advantage of this new law, and Britain would be obliged to recognise their marital status."

## Hawaii set to break US ban

New York: A Hawaii court in August may pave the way for legal homosexual marriage across the United States (Quentin Letts writes).

As a result of a long-running legal action by Nina Baehr and Genora Dancal, a lesbian couple, Hawaii will have to prove a "compelling interest" for its present ban on gay marriages. If the case goes against the state, homosexual weddings would probably have to be recognised throughout the United States under the Constitution's "full faith and credit" clause, which binds the various states to honour each other's procedures.



Sir Peter Ustinov, actor, playwright and director, in 1987

## Germans throw party for man of many roles

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BERLIN

SIR Peter Ustinov yesterday celebrated his 75th birthday in characteristic style — talking wittily in a foreign language to 1,000 prominent guests, including two former German Presidents and the present head of state, Roman Herzog.

Germany put on the one-man gala show in Berlin in part because the country has some claim on the actor's ancestry. Sir Peter's Russian grandfather emigrated to Württemberg and his father, a journalist, became press attaché at the German Embassy in London until he was dismissed by Hitler's Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop. Germany takes lineage seriously and Klaus Kinkel, the present Foreign Minister, was one of many politicians to send congratulations to the British-born, Westminster-educated actor, director and writer.

Pinpointing Sir Peter's nationality has always been a problem for outsiders apart from his Russian and German blood and British upbringing, he has French, Italian and even Ethiopian ancestors; his main residence is in Switzerland. Sir Peter narrows himself down to being a "European".

The plaudits yesterday had similar difficulties in identifying his chief claim to fame. Most settled on his acting, includ-

ing 60 films, his two Oscars (for *Spartacus* and *Topkapi*) and his three Emmies for television performances. Critics were most enthusiastic about his podgy Nero in *Quo Vadis* — the Belgian detective who drew so effectively on his "little grey cells" in *Death on the Nile*.

It seems said the Berlin *Tagesspiegel*, easier to work out which arts he has not mastered. Plainly he is an accomplished novelist: his tenth novel appeared in 1990. He has also written 20 plays and nine screenplays. His caricatures have displayed graphic talent, exhibitions of his photographs have been much praised. Sir Peter also has an international reputation as an opera and theatre director. *Tagesspiegel* concluded there was only one missing talent: architecture. Even this is open to argument since, following in the footsteps of his French mother, he has a high reputation as a designer of theatre sets.

Sir Peter is also a very active UNICEF ambassador, newspaper columnist and a regular compiler and presenter of television documentaries. The one-man show however, highlighted his talent to amuse, both as an aphorist and a mimic. "Laughter has always struck me as the most civilised of human noises," he said.



As Private Angelo in 1949...



in Romanoff and Juliet...



as Hercule Poirot...



and in party mood yesterday

## 'Citizen O' admits killing at least 40 in Ukraine villages

FROM LESIA RUDAKIEWICH IN KIEV AND THOMAS DE WAAL IN MOSCOW

POLICE in Ukraine said yesterday that they were holding a former forestry student on suspicion of carrying out one of the worst murder sprees in recent European history.

Police said the 37-year-old man detained on Sunday evening in the town of Yavorov, western Ukraine, had confessed to more than 40 murders across the country. The man, identified only as "Citizen O", was a native of the town of Zhilomir. He was carrying a hunting rifle that matched the murder weapon in several of the killings and had jewellery and video equipment, which may have belonged to some of his victims.

"This is the first time in Ukraine's modern history that one man has committed so many murders," Leonid Boro-

dich, the First Deputy Interior Minister, said. "This is a terrible crime. It has caused Ukraine a great deal of pain." He said the detained man was "psychologically normal".

A manhunt was launched across Ukraine last month after eight families were brutally murdered in a killing spree that began at the end of last year. Most of the victims were from remote villages in the Lvov region near the border with Poland. There were so many killings in one village, Bratkovichi, that troops were sent to patrol streets and villagers kept their lights burning through the night.

The murders followed a set pattern. The murderer chose an isolated house and shot everyone inside, including the children, with a hunting rifle.

He would then kill any witnesses and set fire to the house. The first victims were four members of a family in Bratkovichi, who were killed and their house torched. Another family of five and two witnesses were killed not long after in the same village.

When police imposed a security cordon on Bratkovichi, the murderer moved to other villages and then committed a wave of killings across the country. He travelled by rail and left almost no clues.

"Citizen O" looks likely to join the "Rostov Ripper" as one of the grisliest serial killers of the former Soviet Union. The "Rostov Ripper", Andrei Chikastilo, killed more than 50 victims in southern Russia over a 17-year period and was executed in 1994.

## Secret Russian complex exposed

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

RUSSIA has for years been secretly constructing a vast underground military complex in the southern Ural Mountains, the Clinton Administration said yesterday.

The complex is being built inside Yamantau mountain by tens of thousands of workers, covers an area the size of Washington and is served by its own railway and road. State Department spokesmen said the Administration did not know what its purpose was, but other American officials suggested it could be anything from a nuclear command centre to a weapons production plant.

The project was started in the early 1980s or earlier, when the Cold War was at its peak, and has for years been monitored by American spy satellites. However, its disclosure by *The New York Times* just before President Clinton meets President Yeltsin in Moscow this weekend will embarrass both Governments.

Russia has been complain-

## Cold War's end brings land bonus for civilians

BY MICHAEL EVANS DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

MORE than 8,000 military sites covering a million hectares will have been handed over to civilian use around the world by the turn of the century, according to research published yesterday.

The global trend in base closures since the end of the Cold War, following decades of an uninterrupted arms race, is highlighted in a book by the

Bonn International Centre of Conversion, an independent research institute.

The majority of the closures have taken place in Europe and the United States. The US has shut down more than 40 per cent of its foreign bases, resulting in the return of about 1,000 sites, mostly in Europe but also in Panama, the Philippines and Bermuda.

Germany has been the country most severely affected. Seven countries had main-

tained permanent bases in former East and West Germany and more than 1.3 million soldiers had guarded the border, which disappeared at reunification in 1990.

Since then more than 4,000 sites occupying 328,000 hectares, or almost 1 per cent of German territory, have been closed. According to the research, *Conversion Survey 1996, Global Disarmament, Demilitarisation and Demobilisation*, the US has with-

drawn 180,000 troops and laid off 41,000 German civilians.

Britain has closed or reduced 330 sites in Germany and returned more than 4,750 hectares of land. France closed or reduced 230 sites, Belgium 120 sites, The Netherlands 20 sites and Canada five sites.

Russia's withdrawal of half a million soldiers from Central and East Europe caused comparatively little economic impact because they lived in closed communities.

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ing that it lacks the money to implement recent arms reduction treaties, and it receives millions of dollars annually to help with the dismantling of its nuclear arsenal on condition that all new military projects are strictly defensive.

A State Department spokesman insisted that the United States had no evidence to suggest the complex violated that condition, but he admitted the Russians had fobbed off previous American attempts to discover what it was by saying it had "nothing to do with arms control agreements or rearmament and is none of your business". He acknowledged that Mr Clinton would probably be forced by yesterday's disclosure to revive the issue this weekend.

"We can't say with confidence what the purpose is, and the Russians are not very interested in having us go in there," another official said. Mr Clinton and other members of the world's G7 leading industrialised countries are meeting in Moscow this weekend to discuss ways to combat black-market trafficking in nuclear materials.

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## English-speakers suffer wrath of Quebec militants

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

ENGLISH-SPEAKERS in Montreal have been harried, fined and, in a handful of cases, threatened with death by militant French-speakers. Six months after the referendum on the sovereignty of Quebec, in which the French-backed independence movement narrowly failed to achieve "50 per cent plus one", there is unease among anglophones in the province's main city. Hospital closures and job losses have fuelled suspicions of anti-English prejudice among local bureaucrats. A shadowy francophone organisation, the Mouvement de Libération du Québec, has blacklisted 22 companies it considers pro-English. Anonymous letters carrying a picture of an armed French revolutionary have been sent to some senior anglophone businessmen. A second list, of "enemies of the people", include the leaders of the anglophone Equality Party. The Mouvement also published the home telephone number of an English-speaking black cartoonist who lampooned francophone leaders. The surname of the cartoonist is Bonaparte. Some of the francophone toughs who telephoned him not only accused him of being a racist but also threatened to kill him. Keith Henderson, leader of the Equality Party, has had the same experience. He answered his telephone at home one night to be told, by a gruff French voice, that "military means should be used to expunge your people from Quebec soil". Another advocate for anglophone rights, Brent Tyler, has had "up to four death threats, all made late at night", and a francophone lawyer who has shared a platform with Mr Tyler has been ostracised by his family. Until now the aggression has been on the fringes, but the Office de la Langue Française, the "language police", clumsily cranked up tensions when its agents seized Passover supplies this month. The special cake mixes, biscuits and sweets, made in New York, did not have bilingual wrappings and were therefore illegal. One prominent Jew, Mark Kotler, said: "No one apologised for the raid. This was anti-Semitism."

English-speaking people are leaving the province. The English-language population of Quebec dropped from 789,185 in 1971 to 626,600 in 1991, and hearsay evidence suggests that the thrust for an independent Quebec has led others to leave this attractive city. It remains a pretty place to visit, but an ugliness dwells beneath the surface. Laurie Heitner, a frail old English-speaker, said she was becoming used to francophones interrupting her conversations in public places and ordering: "Parlez français!"

Allegations of "ethnic cleansing" have been made in arbitration submissions against a Quebec branch of Teleglobe Canada, a telecommunications firm. At a French-run supermarket in a Montreal suburb, young English-speaking shop workers were abruptly sacked. With many anglophones in or approaching old age, there is concern about the closure of two-fifths of hospitals where English is spoken.

Mr Henderson, whose electorally slim party claims to have seen a boom in street-level support since October, says that the referendum "woke up anglophones". A recent party rally attracted 800 people and a meeting of party workers on Sunday saw energetic contributions from the floor.



The singer Madonna and Carlos Leon, the Cuban-born fitness club manager who is the father of her child

## Madonna with child

FROM GILES WHITTILL IN LOS ANGELES

UNLIKE a virgin, the singer Madonna, 37, has completed her metamorphosis from sex symbol to earth mother. She is four months pregnant and "deliriously happy", her publicist confirms.

As famous nowadays for sexual candour as for her pop songs, Madonna — full name Madonna Louise Veronica Ciccone — announced her pregnancy in Budapest, where she is filming Alan Parker's version of the musical *Evita*.

The father of her child will be Carlos Leon, 29, a Cuban-born New York fitness club manager whom she met 18 months ago while jogging in Manhattan's Central Park. Madonna, who was married for four years to actor Sean Penn, and Mr Leon are equally delighted at the prospect, according to the singer's public relations team.

"Madonna doesn't want this to be a big deal, but I don't know how she thinks it won't be a big deal," Liz Rosenberg, her chief spokeswoman, told New York columnist Liz Smith.



Actress Patsy Kensit with Oasis singer Liam Gallagher

## Oasis tour bogs down

FROM GILES WHITTILL IN LOS ANGELES

THE American tour by Oasis, the British pop phenomenon, was in chaos yesterday after the lead guitarist was struck down by tonsillitis, forcing the cancellation of two concerts.

Thousands of fans of the band, touted as Britain's most exciting pop export since The Beatles, were disappointed when Oasis cancelled its Los Angeles concert barely two hours before it was due to start on Monday. Yesterday's concert in Phoenix, Arizona, was also cancelled, while to-

night's in Denver was at the mercy of guitarist Noel Gallagher's doctors.

The impression of a tour collapsing under the pressures of band members' personal problems was strengthened when actress Patsy Kensit, girlfriend of the lead singer, Liam, abruptly left the group to fly home to London. Ms Kensit, who is pregnant, shouted angrily at a photographer at Los Angeles airport before flying home alone. Her relationship reportedly had turned stormy.

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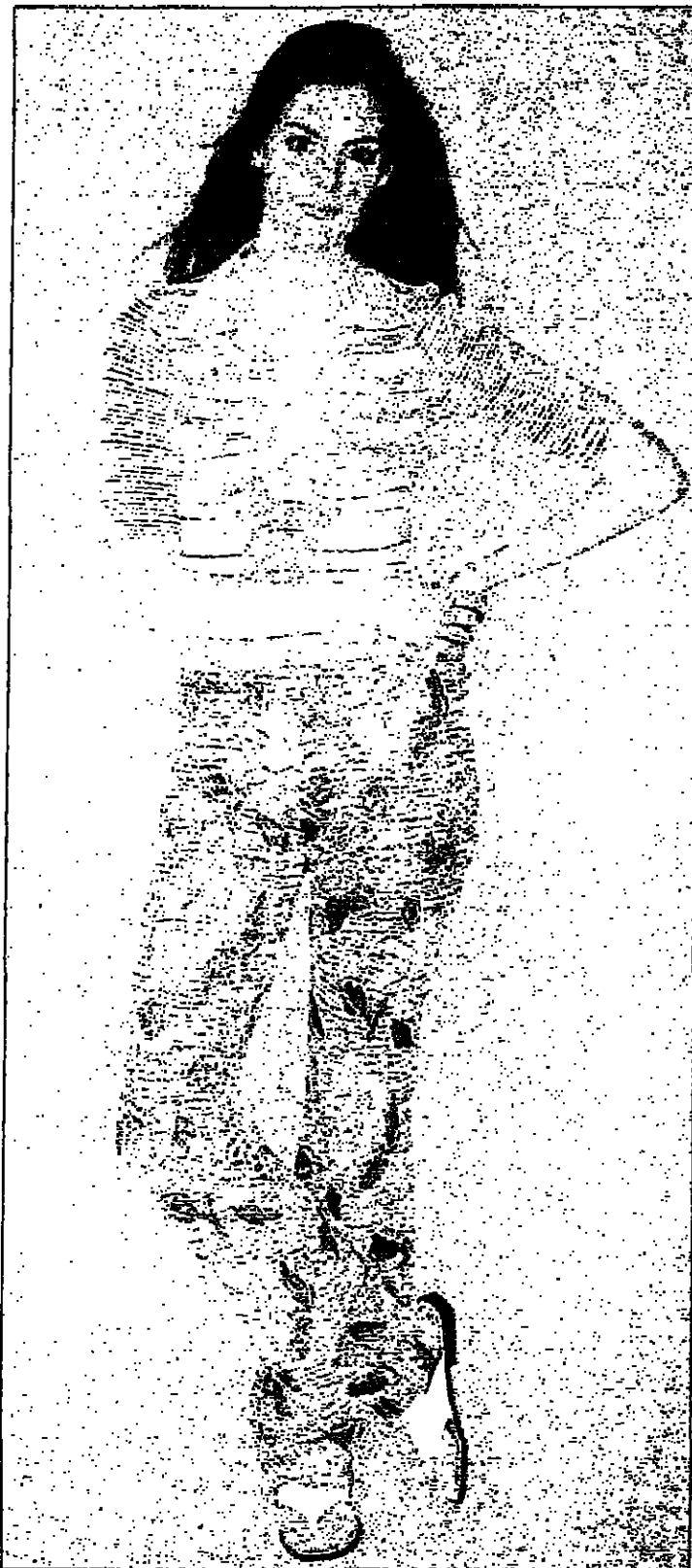
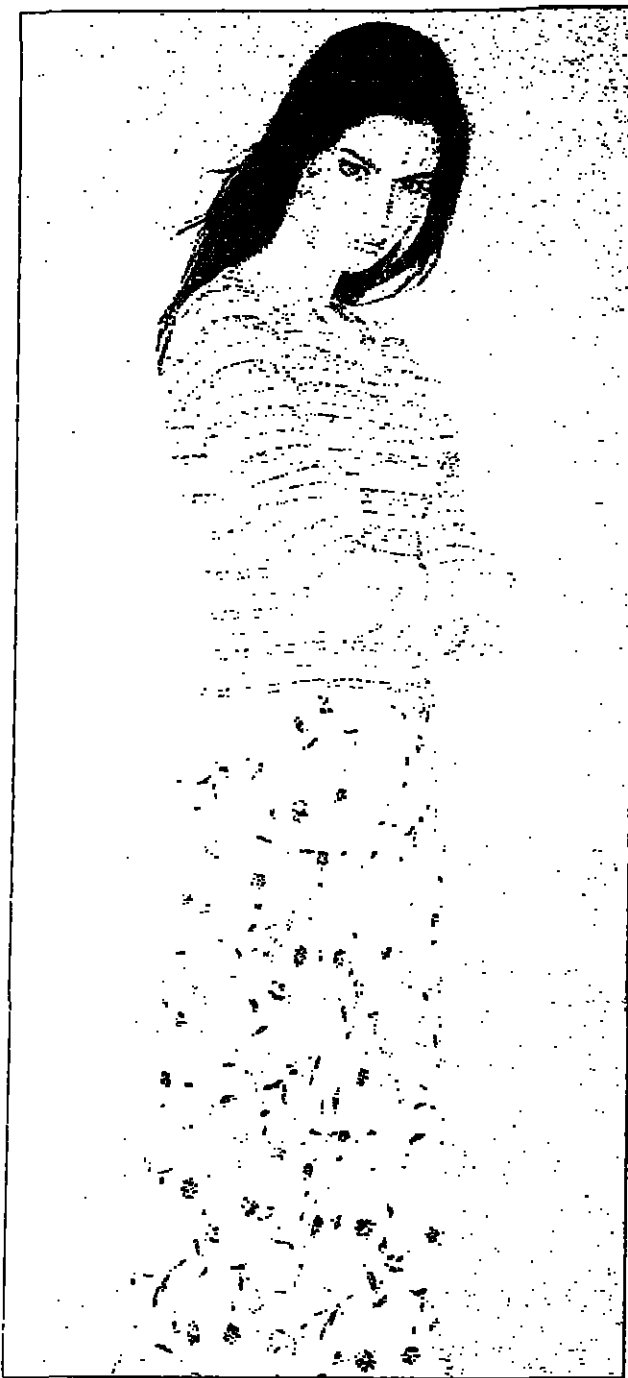
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# All things bright and psychedelic



Put away your little black numbers and think florals, stripes and wild, wild colour — the international catwalks are awash with every hue and pattern

**Fashion journalist of the year**



IAIN R. WEBB

This season, fashion editors the world over appear to be in a state of shock. If there was one unifying element which emerged during the latest collections from London, Paris, Milan and New York, it has to be the shock of colour... and lots of it. The front rows at the shows, a long liquorice lace of black, black and more black, were the antithesis of the clashing citrus brights, shrieking neon shades and more practical pastel hues paraded on the catwalks.

Print provided perhaps the biggest shockwaves. Fashion has been plain, plain, plain for such a long time, with few designers breaking the minimalist mould. However, this season these wildly patterned outfits suddenly looked right again. The catwalks were awash with Technicolor dream-clothes: florals, stripes, checks, Pucci-style geometric patterns, animal prints and swirling scribble designs in the vibrant colours of a child's crayon box. Blistering and bright.

Florals and stripes still provide the easiest entré to pat-

tern. They were certainly everywhere. Flower prints positively bloomed on the international catwalks. From Krizia's spriggy blooms on gauzy black chiffon spaghetti-strap dresses, or faded floral prints on flesh-coloured dresses, to Katharine Hamnett's flashy sequined florals and the opulent beadwork of Giorgio Armani.

In London the young design team Clements Ribeiro used 1950s wallpaper designs as inspiration for their boldly patterned collection.

At Gucci, designer Tom

Ford splashed pink, yellow and white paint-drip stripes on to hipsters worn with mismatched blue and white Op-Art stripe shirts. Gianni Versace featured citrus stripes in his Versus line, colouring silky shirt-dresses and little knitted polo shirts. Even Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons, who is famous for her love affair with black, showed an unrelenting barrage of neon bright stripes.

In America wacky Todd Oldham offered multicoloured sweetie-paper stripes and spiky Missoni-esque zigzags in apple green, dark pink and ochre. The Missoni connection is not accidental. The Italian husband and wife design team, Tai and Rosita Missoni, are celebrating 40 years in the business and a renewed interest in their colourful knitwear designs has surely provided the best birthday present they could have wished for.

Suddenly hip young stylists are running around town in the duo's striped skinny knits, and anyone over the age of 30 who owns one of their original designs is proudly parading it. The Missoni's look is instantly recognisable — psychedelic colourways knitted into computer-generated techno stripes, futuristic zigzags and graphic floral designs. While fashion persists in plundering the past and revisits the 1970s, the Missoni's will continue to receive floral tributes of their own.

Often designers mix the two, like Prada's teal blue, white and milk chocolate stripes worn with mauve and lime flowery prints. These outfits take a retro trip backwards in time. Think Susan Dey in *The Partridge Family*, the popular American TV show which starred David Cassidy, or back issues of *Look Now*, the 1980s teen fashion magazine. The look is essentially bright and cheerful. Happy, smiley clothes for happy, smiley people.



TOP FAR LEFT: Yellow, red and lime stripe sweater, £27, Benetton, selected branches. White floral print midi-skirt, £150, Sonia Rykiel — Inscrptions, Browns, 23-27 South Molton Street, W1 (0171 491 7833)

TOP CENTRE: Pink/red/white space-dyed top, £135, floral print trousers, £400, Missoni, Browns, 23-27 South Molton Street, W1 (0171 491 7833). Fortnum & Mason, Piccadilly. White flip-flop sandals, £24.99, Next (01162 849424)

TOP RIGHT: Pale blue, chocolate brown, orange, yellow and white cashmere sweater, £286, pink, yellow, pale blue and white button-through cotton dress, £300, Clements Ribeiro, Liberty, Harrods (0171 409 7719)

ABOVE: Black, red, yellow and blue stripe sweater, £260, black floral midi-skirt, £150, Sonia Rykiel — Inscrptions, Browns, as above



RIGHT ABOVE: Green, yellow and pink twinset cardigan, £41, top, £29, Benetton, selected branches nationwide. Zigzag blue and white flared trousers, £210, Missoni, as above

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# Royalty, pain and the final farewell

**The divorce of the Duke and Duchess of York has once again put the Royal Family back on a soap opera footing**

NOW that the Church of England is considering offering services to help divorcees mark the end of their marriage, it must be presumed that divorce, even the divorce of a member of the Royal Family, has lost its power to shock.

I do not say that divorce has lost its power to hurt; one would hate facetiously to sweep aside the anxieties and possible sufferings of children. But these are private concerns. The questions are: is the divorce of the Duke and Duchess of York a public concern? Should it be?

The answer to both questions has to be no. Very few of us are untainted by an appetite for gossip, but that is not quite the same thing. But it does not and cannot matter to us whether Andrew and Fergie are joined or torn asunder. And it makes no difference constitutionally. Frankly, after the litany of disasters that constitute the Royal Family, one is too punch-drunk to muster much of a response. There have been too many gory details to read about over the past few years for one tidy little amputation now to raise many eyebrows.

The shock, anyway, came when the Yorks announced their separation. Their union had always been so publicly physical. During their engagement and in the early days of their marriage, they made it clear, obvious you could say, that they couldn't take their hands off one another. Of course, it may be that one should always be suspicious of those who make demonstrations of affection in public, but it seems that the closeness was genuine. Sex may not be everything, as we are constantly told these days, but it's not nothing, either. Marriages that fail are normally marriages which have foundered sexually.

From the outside, the Prince and Princess of Wales's marriage always looked like a cold union: their separation may have shocked more as a constitutional matter, but on a basic, human or emotional level, the failure of the Yorks' marriage gave more of a jolt.

Even so, everything is sus-

ceptible to the law of diminishing returns. With each new instalment of the not so merry wives of Windsor, we are a little less shocked. The announcement of the Yorks' divorce comes so swiftly upon the story that they had an open marriage, and would continue to sleep with whomsoever they chose but also with one another, that it is hard not to deduce that there came an order from on high. In short, the divorce is an attempt at damage limitation. Is it too late for all that? It is hard not to conclude that enough damage has been done, that nothing anyone could do now could stop the rot. And yet, such talk would be rather beside the point. The Queen must surely be dismayed to have the monarchy held up to ridicule and to have her family lampooned. She must be irked that her children and their spouses have been between them brought, as it were, the game into disrepute. But whatever she does, however badly her children behave, is in fact of no consequence. It is important to remember that.

By which, I don't mean that the behaviour of the Royal Family might not appear to have ramifications, or that we might not have an opinion on it. But the point about our monarchy is that it exists and will continue to exist, regardless of how well or badly members of the family behave. It doesn't take a particularly good historian to see that it has survived jolts rather worse than a few infidelities and divorces. Story after story is printed about the rising unpopularity of the Royal Family, but the Royal Family doesn't depend on popularity for its existence. That's the whole point of it.

Similarly, there is no point ever asking — as countless polls do — whether we think the Prince of Wales would make a good King or not. Whatever we think is immaterial. These days, it doesn't do to look as if you scorn popular opinion. So I can see that the Royal Family must appear to pay lip service to it. But it cannot be more than that. Who marries whom, who divorces whom: none of this is to the point. If you believe in blue blood, then what does it matter in whose veins it flows? Much is spoken about incipient republicanism in this country. Why, it is said tremulously, the tabloids are just waiting for an excuse to get rid of the Royal Family. Quite

apart from the fact that it is hard to deduce exactly what anyone means by this — a palace coup by green-shaded editors and their hack-accomplices, perhaps — it seems unbelievable that there will ever be much pressure for the tabloids to destroy their chief source of copy. But again, we get back to the point: the outrage, real or more often feigned, provoked by the behaviour or marital history of members of the Royal Family

will really damage the Royal Family is unlikely. The Princess of Wales's evidence so far hardly puts the family in a good light, but while the adverse publicity may be distasteful to them, it cannot injure the monarchy.

A devout republican cannot be convinced we should have a monarchy however fine and upstanding individual members of the Royal Family might prove themselves to be, any more than a monarchist would wish to overthrow the Royal Family on account of the bad behaviour of any of its number.

Those loyal to the crown might, it is true, wish for the Royal Family to behave better in the first place, but that is only because they would wish to maintain the fiction of its superiority. But even so, they know it is not really to do with that.

Besides, with getting on for half the married population due to divorce, it would seem strange to view the dissolution of a marriage as an evil which must on no account happen. One could indeed view this announcement of the Yorks' divorce as a concession to modern values, rather than a shock to the system. Upper-class philandering is not tolerated in the way

it was in Edward VII's time: these days the middle classes want divorce and so this is what they must have.

This may, then, be a purely cynical exercise. We can have no inkling as to whether the Duke and Duchess of York themselves wish it, nor can speculation make us any the wiser. Like most gestures of course, it is, as the cliché goes, an empty one. But I think it was ever apparent that if there had to be a sacrifice, it was always going to be poor Fergie.



Nigella Lawson

is simply a smokescreen. The divorce of the Yorks might well help the Royal Family, not because more leaks would damage it, but because it puts it all back on soap opera course. Thus we're thrown off the real scent. It is bread and circuses.

The putative divorce of the Prince and Princess of Wales is of a more serious nature. It does concern, after all, the heir to the throne and it does, or might seem to, throw up questions as to the succession. Whether in reality even that

At first, they couldn't take their hands off each other

INSIDE SECTION  
2

Even at the age of 80, Lord Menzies still wants to make the world a better place to live in. Page 33

Before the dream turned sour: the Duke and Duchess boarding a plane at Heathrow to leave for their honeymoon

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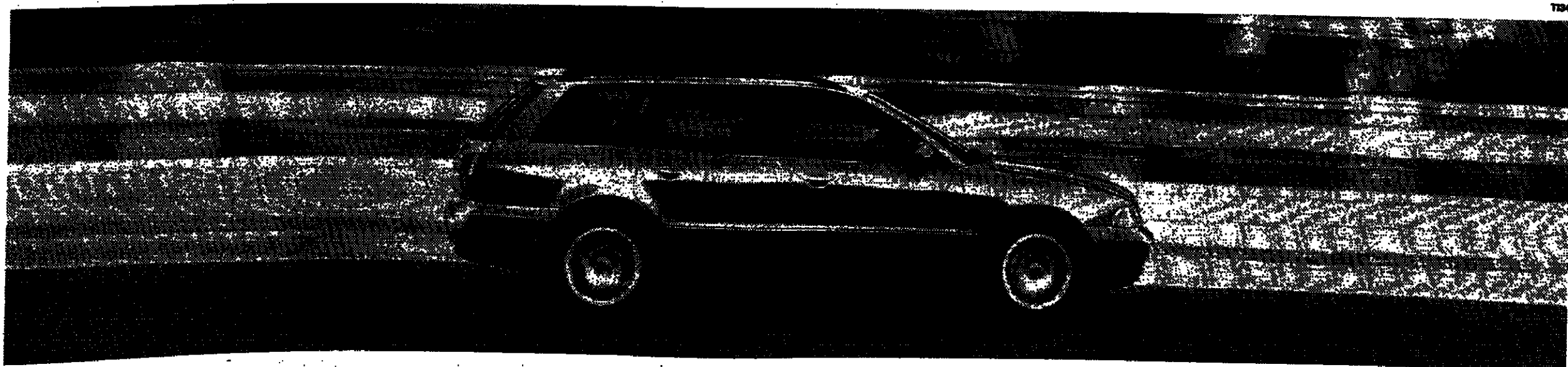
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## Alan Coren



■ This month's new tax regulations are a load of rubbish

Here endeth the first week of the rest of my life. It endeth badly, and it endeth at its best: because the here it endeth at is beside the midnight dustbin, whence I can see stretched out before me enough boding to last until that moment when my life has no rest left. This is because what is literally stretched out before me, spread from the bin, ill-met by moonlight, is the domestic detritus of that first week. And, since you ask, the reason I have one hand inside this chicken carcass while the other is shaking old tea-bags onto the path is because Sunday night is when I do my accounts. I did not always do them in the dustbin, mind, I used to do them in the study, scribbling from memory into a little red book with a large Bell's in the first currently up the chicken, but that was in the blissful days before the first week of the rest of my life.

For it was also the first week of the rest of the Inland Revenue's life: the week it launched new tax obligations on the self-employed, obliging them henceforth to employ themselves primarily in the collection of every scrap of paper bearing upon their fiscal lives. Be they never so scrappy, these now have to be produced whenever the taxman decrees, they must be the originals, and they must be kept for six years on pain of a £3,000 fine, per annum, for non-production. I cannot, any longer, scribble "To purchase of Who's Who, £95" in my little red book in the sure and certain knowledge that, come next April, my kindly taxman will reimburse me 40 per cent for this essential professional handmaiden. I now have to show him the Waterstone bill which could well be inside this chicken, hang on, no it isn't, time to spread those old coffee grounds about a bit, but if that's where it is it'll be browned to illegibility by now, eliciting nothing from HM Inspector save an invitation to pull this one, never mind £3,000 for making an unsubstantiated claim.

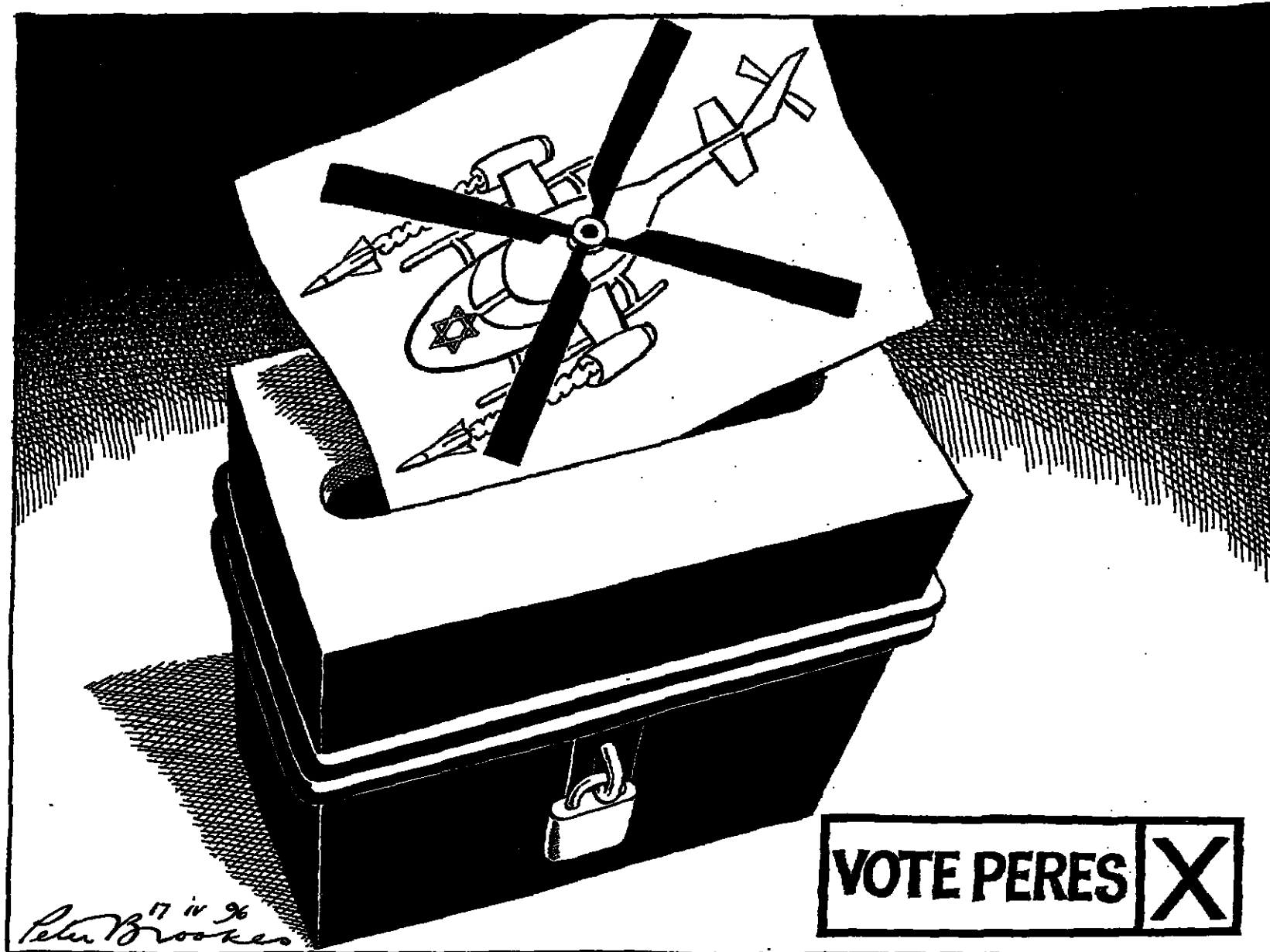
I know I had the bill when I came out of the shop on Wednesday, but all is a blank thereafter. I may have chewed it up on the bus, I have done that all my life with tickets, stared out of the window, chewed; this has not so far stopped me from claiming business travelling expenses, but it will now, it is goodbye staring and chewing. Her Majesty wants to see the tickets, chop-chop.

So did I, then, go on to the Waterstone bill as a main course, as I once followed an Awayday with a tasty dry-cleaning ticket, and the man said, mousers, what trousers? There's a different problem with Monday's newsworthy bill. I went in to buy two box files, one to be neatly labelled "Outgoing", one "Incoming", for all my nice new paperwork, and I was going to make the bill for this professional outgoing the first to be punched and filed, until I looked at it and saw that it had not itemised two non-professional Mars bars and a carton of Silk Cut. It was just a globalised till-receipt. I cannot file that, the Inspector would be on it like a ferret. "£38.60 for box files, I was not born yesterday, sunshine, take him down!"

And I shall have to read all junk mail, now, I gather that, among all the air miles, free T-shirts, cut-price pot-holing breaks, prize socket-sets, etc. the building society, AA, BT, or whatever, often pops in a statement. You have to have these, now, or you get slung in pokie.

I took a cab to the BBC on Tuesday, and, unprecedentedly, asked the driver for a receipt, whereupon he in his turn asked me to do him a favour, and drove off. I may have to give up cabs. And plumbers: the reason this chicken carcass is still whole is that the waste disposal is on the Fritz, I am waiting for the plumber, cash, no receipt, but I still used to jot such items in the little red book. I got 10 per cent against household expenses. Try it now and the taxman could well contact the plumber for documentary corroboration, and the plumber would be round to my premises like a shot. A big man, never without a heavy spanner.

There's always the chance the Waterstone bill was in my shirt pocket. Something was, before it was a little soggy ball stuck in the washing machine filter. Might have been my bank statement, though; I remember thinking, it's an offence not to file these, I'll put it somewhere safe. Hitherto, of course, inside a chicken would have been as good a place as any. But not now. Now is the rest of my life.



## Beef, butchery and Kafka

A ritual slaughter of our cattle herds merely to appease the EU insults the common sense of the British consumer

Simon Jenkins

At last we have a hero in the great beef saga. He is that yeoman of the carvery, that Falstaff of the shires, the British beef eater. To hell with the headlines, he has said. To hell with "a million deaths" and "worse than AIDS", with equivocating ministers and squeamish Eurocrats. To hell with the politics of unreason. Read the small print, says our hero. The risk in eating British beef is trivial. At the last count, sales of beef in the shops were at 85 per cent of the pre-scare levels and sales of steak and joints are actually up.

Over Easter I was reckless. I took my life in my hands and visited a farm. Many urban readers of this newspaper will be unaware of the fury of cattle farmers at what they see as the cross industry of the public debate on BSE. Almost every meadow in the West Country is planted with a placard, begging passers-by not to be deceived by publicity and pleading for the lives of its cows. I find it unimaginable that any London policymaker could have contemplated incinerating every cow in every field on every farm in Britain, and for so feeble a reason as to "restore public confidence".

Yesterday the Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, promised the beef industry a cool £200 million in compensation for recent market disturbances. He all but nationalised the slaughterhouse industry with £110 million to save firms from bankruptcy. This is the sort of bailing out of overcapacity that Tories used to exhort Labour governments for. I cannot see any justification for this money. But then I cannot see any reason for denying British beef access to markets, nor for a policy of slaughter (which is said to be imminent), and I see absolutely none for compensating farmers or renderers with public money.

This industry took a calculated risk, widely acknowledged, in feeding offal tissue to cows. If farmers feel cheated by a supplier, they should do what other businesses do and sue. Farmers are not benefits claimants: not yet. Their incomes rose last year faster than any other occupational group — except perhaps utility executives. Milk quotas are ludicrously valuable. If an inspector closes a hotel or refuses a planning application or finds that a motor car has a faulty component, the victim does not run blubbing to the Government for money. He goes bankrupt. Why is the Treasury such a soft touch for farmers? Mr Hogg said there was no case for a mass cull of cattle. He was thinking in

terms of "tens of thousands", but only provided the European Union lifts its ban. Again compensation will be paid. But the BSE epidemic is declining fast. Any leakage into the food chain, if there has been one, took place in the 1980s. There is no basis in science or statistics or common sense for a cull. Since there is no rational basis for one, there is no basis for spending public money compensating farmers for one, wherever the money comes from. Governments should not use tax revenues as ex gratia payments to remove the risk from capitalism, let alone to induce foreign governments to honour their treaty obligations. Parliament may be a toothless watchdog in these matters, but it is the National Audit Office also asleep?

As for Europe, I am mystified at the Government's spinelessness. The instant ban on British beef imports to the Continent a month ago appeared to be justified by the European Farm Commissioner, Franz Fischler, on grounds of safety. Now he says it was public relations. In other words, he opened his newspaper one morning, reads (or misreads) the scare comments of some scientist and feels he should act dramatically.

What is significant is that he felt under no obligation to allay the scare, but sought rather to legitimise it. The British Government was unwise to politicise the shift in scientific evidence announced by the BSE standing committee last month, a shift which came with advice that no change in policy was needed. The response from Brussels was to fall on this shift and have a fit of hysteria. A full Commission was summoned, followed by a meeting of the august Council of Ministers. Continental Europe went into its most gleeful mode, that of raging Anglophobia. It appeared to be willing on Britain the biggest systematic slaughter of living creatures in British history: of the nation's 12 million cows.

I could sense the Schadenfreude

running through the French, German and Belgian Governments as each leapt into action to appease its gloating beef lobbies by banning British imports. French customs officials turned back trucks at Calais. The Germans, with more Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease cases than Britain, went berserk. The bans were blatant constraints on free trade, without legal justification. Seeking to alter market confidence — indeed distorting it by exaggerating risk — is no justification for a trade ban. The 30 per cent of British beef sales that go for export were stopped.

I hate generalised trade sanctions, but I have no doubt what Britain should have done next. After protests in the Council of Ministers had failed, the Cabinet should have retaliated by banning imports of continental beef. These happen to comprise 30 per cent of domestic consumption. That

raised the negotiating ante. Instead, Britain is in the hopeless position of not knowing how many healthy cattle it has to kill to get the ban lifted. British ministers must go to the next Luxembourg meeting with an offer to act irrationally (killing healthy cattle) so as to appease the irrationality of their critics, but without knowing how much irrationality (how many cattle) will do the trick.

When policy is motivated by hysteria and hysteria can be sated only by slaughter, there is no knowing where the bloodletting can end. I cannot imagine a better illustration of the madness to which Europe's farm policy has sunk. Some enthusiasts say repatriating agricultural policy to British control would be even worse. Rubbish.

Big government, be it in Whitehall or Brussels, boasts that it embodies reason and efficiency in public administration. It can see the wood above the trees. It can discount grubby local emotions. It can

plan. The distant ruler has the freedom to be sane and the power to make sanity effective. Yet last month, Herr Fischler mimicked Kafka's trial judge. "You object that this is not a trial at all? You are right: it is only a trial when I recognise it as one." A trial is an institution of reason. Herr Fischler does not pretend to reason in this matter. He might have continued with his Kafka, as he shook his loaded wallet at Britain's farmers: "It is often better to be in chains than to be free."

This is madness. The more distant a decision from its point of implementation, the more likely it is to be irrational. The greater the unreason, the greater the error and the greater the likely cruelty. And when Europe-wide bodies act for reasons of "public relations", heaven help us all. I am sure innocent ill ordered the Albigensian massacres to "restore public confidence" in the papacy. I am sure Catherine of Medici felt the same about the Huguenots on St Bartholomew's Day. I am sure Mao's order to kill all of China's birds because they are the crops was applauded by the apparitions locked in the Great Hall of the People. An instruction to mass slaughter has long been a totem of the efficiency of central authority. The general knows that the order to kill — and to die — is the true test of loyalty. To impress his enemies, Taras Bulba butchered a hundred of his finest warriors. To impress his enemies, John Major will butcher ten thousand of his finest cows.

The public will view such slaughters with horror. The farmers' union, its eyes on compensation, may remark that "this crisis is now beyond the realm of science" and welcome a well-financed slaughter policy. Consumers are reacting with greater maturity. As with all food scares, they have hesitated, heard what they have been told and reacted with common sense. They regard beef as safe, and are eating it again. Europe's consumers will do so as well, in time. They will all blow raspberries at commissioners, ministers and lobbyists who claim to be privy to the confidence of the market.

Consumers are the market, and the market is working. It needs no assistance from Brussels, nor from those who want to turn the English countryside into a bovine charnel house. As for that charnel house, what has happened to veterinary ethics? When vets are told to kill healthy animals to appease Europe's politicians and help businesses with their "public relations", are they not subject to a Hippocratic oath?

## Pensions made to measure

Anatole Kaletsky asks if Labour has a pot of gold

If Labour hopes to find a pot of gold to pay for improvements in public services, it has only one place to look. Britain's welfare state may be modest by European standards, but the combined cost to the taxpayer of health, pensions, social security and personal social services is still £130 billion a year, or 46 per cent of total public spending.

As one Labour leader told me, "we can sit here till doomsday and say we will govern without being tax-and-spenders, but we won't be able to prove it unless we can reform the welfare state". Labour says it will save money by putting the jobless back to work. But with macroeconomic policies identical to the Tories — and business policies, such as the minimum wage, which will destroy jobs at the margin — why should we believe such claims? Training and education, even if successful, will help only in the very long term. Reforms in welfare itself could in principle encourage people to work, but Labour's policies in this area are not very different from the Tories'. For example, the vaunted idea of "carrot and stick" measures to get under-25s off the dole will depend entirely on the training carrots: the stick of a 40 per cent benefit cut for those who refuse already exists.

Yet Labour does have a chance to save big money on welfare, building on what the Tories have done. Confronted with growing welfare costs, the Tories said one thing and did two others.

They said they would root out all sorts of scroungers — homeless teenagers, unmarried mothers, refugees and nasty people of that kind. This produced big headlines but small savings. The two things the Tories did were more important: they tried to squeeze better value out of the health service by introducing commercial management, and they quietly restructured the state pension, putting it on a gradually declining trend.

The health experiment was, on balance, a failure, certainly in restoring



public confidence, and probably in reducing costs. Labour will partly reverse it. Some of the reasons for disappointment are similar to those in education: health cannot be rationed by money, and medical workers are motivated partly by non-commercial values. In principle, a market-based health system is hard to devise. In practice, no country has invented a commercial health system more efficient than the state-run NHS.

Labour's main plans can be briefly summed up as follows. The Tory split between health planning and delivery of services will be preserved, but the present renewable contracts between hospitals and health authorities will give way to long-term agreements. Fund-holding will be replaced by a new system of GP commissioning, with large numbers of GPs grouped together to buy services and manage their relations with the NHS. Whether these changes will restore public confidence in the health service is an open question, but in the short term further upheavals are bound to increase costs, even if they do eventually improve morale.

For any hope of saving money, therefore, Labour must turn to pensions. Here a genuine opportunity lies within Labour's grasp. The Tory reforms have tamed the growth of state pensions; so much so that in the next century a National Insurance surplus could make room for substantially lower taxes or higher spending on other programmes. But to continue making savings on state pensions, the government must ensure that people make private provision to stave off poverty in old age. A new "second tier" of private pensions is needed for millions of casual workers outside occupational schemes.

Here Labour's policy, to be announced in detail next month by Chris Smith, promises a genuine advance. The Tories, essentially, want the insurance industry to sell more personal pensions. Labour, however, believes — with good reason — that personal pensions are another instance of market failure: the sales costs of competing insurers make them prohibitively expensive compared with National Insurance or occupational schemes. Labour therefore proposes to create a small number of large and competing schemes, with costs regulated by the government, but investment left to the private sector. The Tories had hoped to portray Labour's pension plans as a new device for creeping nationalisation or covertly raising taxes. But these schemes will not be compulsory and investment will be privately managed.

If Labour managed to pull millions of casual and self-employed workers into pension schemes without compulsion, it could, with a clear conscience, allow the basic state pension to continue to wither away. Gradually there would be leeway for more public spending or lower taxes. The next Labour government, but two might even discover a crack of gold.

P-H-S

Tomorrow, in the Business section: Business, investment and finance.

## Rose blooms

DISPLAYING all the unorthodox energies he showed in the former Yugoslavia, General Sir Michael Rose seems to be thriving in his new job as the Army's Adjutant General. Speaking at a conference in London yesterday, he described two incidents which typify the Rose approach to what some might have thought would be a rather dreary desk job for the former SAS officer, overseeing personnel and discipline.

Rose told of the formidable sergeant-major of his own regiment, the Coldstream Guards, who took it upon himself to help his boss in his campaign to boost declining numbers.

Taking advantage of the cash bonuses which can be offered to soldiers as an incentive to stay in the Army, the sergeant-major lined up 43 guardsmen, who had requested to leave, in a room with two tables. On one table was a pile of banknotes. The other was bare.

The guardsmen were told, Rose recounted, that they could leave by one door empty-handed or by the other with £1,000 if they stayed in the Army. "The soldiers took the money," crowed Rose.

On another recent occasion, Rose found himself chatting to a recruiting sergeant. Looking him straight in the eye, Rose asked whether he would be prepared to consider enlisting a teenager who had "taken away a bicycle, was drunk in charge of the bicycle and was riding it without lights". The sergeant, baffled at the question, said yes, he would. Right answer. "Good," said Rose, "because that was me."



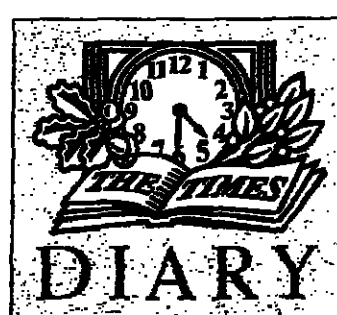
Political heroine of the week is Clare Short, the Shadow Transport Secretary, for her robust stand against the polished toadpots of New Labour. Now more honours. Conservative Central Office has awarded her a nickname: "One Sandwich" Short.

## Give him time

UNCONDITIONAL parental support is clearly not a quality admired in the Ingrams household. At an exhibition of works by Fred Ingrams in Chelsea on Monday, the artist's father, Richard, the crumpled editor of *The Oldie*, looked less thanwhelmed. Gazing at the lurid, cellulite-heavy nudes on display, he said: "I'm certainly not buying any. They are rather expensive for me. I might buy one in five years' time though, when he's come to his senses."

## Beep beep

PARLIAMENT returned yesterday to find scenes from the Key-stone Kops in New Palace Yard. The cutprits were John Redwood, MP for Wokingham, and his ebullient aide de camp, Hywel Williams. As they pulled past security, one of the guards noticed someone



in the back of Redwood's car taking photographs, a strict security no-no. They were ordered to stop to receive their admonishment. The cars behind grew restless, being forced to nudge backwards and forwards in the ensuing bottleneck. Some were honking. In the car behind Redwood was the quite formidable Dame Janet Fookes, Deputy Speaker and MP for Plymouth Drake, whom one is not advised to incite to road rage. Eager to attend a Speaker's meeting, she found herself sandwiched. "I had to summon my composure," she said bravely. "But I was very British about it. I sat in the queue very patiently without complaining."

Paddy Ashdown has been inspired by Forrest Gump, the celluloid idiot savant who coined the

phrase "stupid is as stupid does". Asked at the launch of his party's local election campaign on Monday whether he felt threatened by Tony Blair's stranglehold on the political centre, he replied — perhaps showing more idiot than savant — "Well, centre is as centre does."

## Last lunch

POPEYE had his spinach. Wellington had his beef, but for England's cricketers, nothing will quite do like the food of Nancy Doyle. When the England team step out at Lord's this summer, however, they will be the first England side in 35 years to play at the ground without Mrs Doyle's vicelike churning inside them. The mistress of the roasting pan has retired.

Mrs Doyle's food was manly, good — and always served with chips. For the heartier sort of player, Ian Botham and Mike Gatting, for instance, third helpings were standard.

"She has been a stern disciplinarian," says Dennis Silk, chairman of the Test and County Cricket Board. "No cricketer dared to go into lunch improperly dressed because he knew Nancy would send him out to smarten up. Even

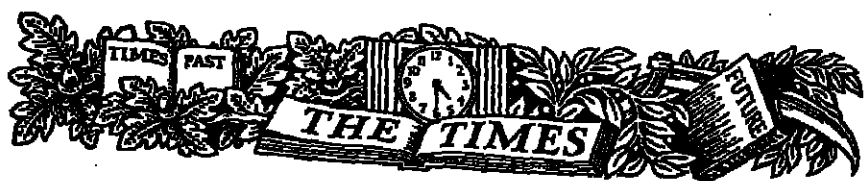


Mrs Doyle at home at Lord's

British Prime Ministers have cowered beneath her gaze." Nothing less than a place on the board of selectors will do for her.

With the announcement that the divorce of the Duke and Duchess of York should be cleared by May, York precedent is being followed. The only other Duke of York to divorce was Henry VIII. The two wives who received the 16th-century equivalent of their divorce papers also did so in May.





## STILL ON THE LINE

Louise Jensen's family is owed a better response from Britain

The killing in Cyprus of the young Danish woman, Louise Jensen, brought shame to the British army. Although three soldiers of The Royal Green Jackets have been properly sentenced to life imprisonment for her abduction, rape and manslaughter, the stain on the Army's reputation has only grown in the days since their conviction by a Cypriot court in Larnaca. Jensen's dignified, grieving family have taken the view that the British authorities owe much more than the few words which have been uttered — many of them egregious — by army officers and ministers of the Crown. We agree.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, written yesterday by a friend of the Jensen family, the dead woman's parents have called the British Government to account for its indifference to her death and to the suffering of her family. "The British Army," the letter says, "and the British Government responsible for the Army's activities, have lost a tremendous amount of respect around the world." This last judgment is, alas, as damning as it is true.

On the day after the three killers were sentenced, we called on the authorities to ensure that Britain's carefully cultivated international reputation for disciplined, reliable soldiers was not placed in further jeopardy by insensitive army handling of Miss Jensen's killing. A perfect example of this clumsiness was provided, on the day the trial ended, by Brigadier Arthur Denaro, the deputy commander of the British forces on Cyprus. "This was an isolated and thoroughly horrendous case," he said, "but

nobody would blame the Army for what these men did." He compounded his folly by appealing to observers not to "get this incident out of perspective".

The only right perspective, however, is that of Miss Jensen's family. It is futile to tell them that there was no "failure" on the part of the Army. Of course there was failure and it was abject. As a correspondent pointed out on this page, "soldiers' behaviour is linked to their morale, which itself is linked to effective leadership". The three soldiers were found guilty of killing Miss Jensen: their officers stand guilty, too, of a failure to lead. Yet in his Adjutant-General's conference yesterday, General Sir Michael Rose — the Army Board member responsible for personnel and discipline — made scarcely a reference to the Jensen case.

In its poignant letter to John Major, the family ask whether "the British Army and the British Government intend to regain the respect lost by the appalling act of three professional soldiers under their administration and responsibility". They suggest, further, that the Army and Government "may retrieve some of their dignity by offering appropriate compensation". This would be both right and just. Poul and Anette Jensen, Louise's father and mother, should be compensated for their daughter's death — as a symbol of the nation's sense of responsibility. They are owed, also, a full and formal apology. In our article after the trial we said that the reputation of the British army and its ability to do its job was on the line in Cyprus. It is still on the line.

## GET SHORTY

The leadership fumes, but voters may like a little candour

The moment that Clare Short opened her mouth to talk about tax on Sunday morning, it was clear that the Tories would exploit her frankness. John Major delightedly used Ms Short's words against Tony Blair at Question Time yesterday. Her admission that people at her own level of income ought to pay more tax was jumped upon as smartly by her own party leadership as by the Conservatives. Conventional wisdom on both sides thinks that such remarks damage Labour; voters, it is thought, will believe that Mr Blair's party has a hidden agenda on tax which will only emerge once an election has been won.

Labour's media controllers now hold their breath whenever Ms Short appears on air. Whether she is calling for the legalisation of cannabis, criticising Harriet Harman's choice of school or advocating higher tax, her candour makes her a target. On Monday, she had to be kept away from a rail privatisation press conference lest it turn into a seminar on progressive tax rates.

The electorate may, however, be more sophisticated than party strategists think. People know that Gordon Brown, not Ms Short, will be Chancellor of the Exchequer should Labour win office. They know that Ms Short is famous for not being able to smother what she really believes in anodyne party puffery. That is part of what makes her popular. Ms Short's contributions could even be electorally valuable to Mr Blair.

They reassure potential and traditional Labour voters that a cause has not been entirely lost in new Labour's attempt to capture Tory ground. Some voters genuinely do believe that cannabis should be legalised; others think that richer people should pay more tax. They may suspect that Mr Blair disagrees: but Ms Short's frank admissions at least make them think that Labour is more on their side than are the Tories. Her little indiscretions allow some steam to escape from the pressure-cooker atmosphere

created by the Labour leader's insistence on strict discipline.

The Shadow Transport Secretary plays another useful role for Mr Blair. On internal party disputes, she has proved herself robustly loyal and capable of swinging the Left behind the leadership. At last year's party conference, her powerful speech in favour of the National Executive Committee's deselection of Liz Davies won for Mr Blair a vote that might easily have been lost. Unlike, say, Margaret Beckett, she is unwavering in the face of left-wing pressure.

If Mr Blair depends on Ms Short, so does she on him. Her constituency, Birmingham Ladywood, is one of four in that city whose local party has been suspended, while investigations are made into possible Asian vote-buying. The four constituencies are to be merged into three before the next election and there is strong pressure for one of the candidates to be Muslim. Ms Short needs the NEC, under Mr Blair's instruction, to impose her on one of the constituencies so that she can remain in Parliament.

So this relationship between Ms Short and her leader, which began in hostility, has developed into a convergence of interest. The two are also friendlier to each other than they were in the past. Each admires the other's qualities, and Ms Short candidly admits that "I changed my mind about Tony Blair".

Of course collective responsibility is necessary for smooth government. Ms Short's behaviour is only on the cusp of acceptability, and she has already had to resign twice from the front bench because she disagreed with the party line. But there has to be room in political life for the occasional maverick. On a wall in her house she displays the Mark Twain line that "loyalty to a petrified opinion never broke a chain or fired a human soul": she has surely something to offer the constrained and soulless world of Westminster politics.

## OUT OF THE SUN

A marriage that was never made for poetry

"Upon this day in Westminster that brings the Prince his Bride, Out of the sun there swoops a song that cannot be denied": thus did the Poet Laureate, Ted Hughes, begin his song to mark the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of York in the summer of 1986. It was not his finest work, but as the years went by, the subject of the poem came easily to match the awfulness of its lines.

In the years since that initial brightness faded, the marriage has brought little but dispute upon the Duke's long-suffering mother and the institution over which she presides. The same television sets which the poet described as trembling on the day of the wedding were last night replaying the infamous royal *It's a Knockout* programme. Those holiday camp scenes were the first step down the steep hill of diminishing public respect: others quickly followed. Almost as soon as the country had "dried its eyes" after the ceremony, this royal couple began to show themselves as the least dignified, the most determined, it seemed, to shrug off the mystique in which the family had deliberately, according to Bagehotian principles, been shrouded.

Almost every step that they took jarred with the accepted behaviour of the Royal Family. Their home in Windsor Great Park was described as a cross between a drive-in burger bar and an out-of-town Tesco store. Their fondness for expensive holidays, untempered by conspicuous devotion to charitable duties, lent them a reputation for extravagance and frivolity. Not long after the birth of their two daughters it became clear that their marriage was doomed.

Not all the fault was theirs. Expectations were too high; the preparation was too little. But the Duchess in particular did little that endeared herself to the British public and much that did not. Her covetings, in front of her children, with John Bryan, her "financial adviser", could not easily be defended on the ground that the long lens of a press photographer had intruded too far. Her commercial dealings and hunger for money added to the unpopularity of the younger royals and the tarnishing of the family's image.

All sympathy is due to the Queen who, only days before her 70th birthday, must endure further reminders of the failure of her children's marriages and further contemplation of the effect of these break-ups on the institution which she represents. She herself has been irreproachable in her conduct as monarch and can still tap a deep vein of public loyalty and support. Yet she must rue the day that the concept of a Royal Family rather than simply a monarchy was invented. Bagehot thought it a useful device for ensuring the endurance of the Crown. But should the public ever tire of Britain's constitutional monarchy, the fault will lie not with the Queen but with her offspring.

In July ten years ago *The Times* wished Prince Andrew and his wife every happiness in words barely less optimistic if somewhat less colourful than the Poet Laureate's. It would be unkind to wish them any less happiness today. It is their saving grace that, unlike the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duke and Duchess have managed to remain on good terms — at least with each other.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

### Change of attitude to young offenders

From Ms Helen Edwards

Sir, Magnus Linklater ("Making friends of the friends", April 11) rightly points out the futility of much of our response to youth violence.

Focusing all our attention and most of our resources on locking up young offenders for longer periods may appear to offer the public more protection but will have little impact on the problem of violent crime and may even make matters worse.

In Scotland the children's panel system offers a more promising way forward: it seeks to involve everyone in the case to ensure that the young person changes his or her behaviour. We should certainly be prepared to learn from this sensible approach, but we need to go even further to tackle the underlying reasons why young people engage in antisocial behaviour and appear to show little respect for themselves or for other people.

Rather than simply banishing them from society, as current policy seems to suggest, we should seek to reintegrate young people, especially young men. One of the most tangible ways to give them a realistic prospect of achieving a job. This is one of the best crime-prevention measures for a safer community and will encourage young people to learn self-respect and self-worth.

Yours,  
HELEN EDWARDS  
(Director of Communications),  
National Association for the Care  
and Resettlement of Offenders,  
169 Clapham Road, SW9,  
April 12

From Miss Julie Daniels

Sir, Magnus Linklater's article touched a raw nerve. The failings of society and the resultant production of "a generation without rules" is a moot point.

I came from what many would describe as a deprived background (inner-city Liverpool, no paternal support, very little money) and the values that society failed to provide were instilled by my mother.

The basic manners, morals and rules one should learn as a child were to be found at home. Society was not expected to play that role.

To describe the desecration of a graveyard as avenging a sense of loss is puzzling. Such children have never been taught the values most of us take as the essential foundation of living in a civilised world and consequently satisfy destructive urges that have never been checked.

I agree that the Scottish children's panel system seems better than the system in England and Wales and that its example should be followed. However, society is perhaps to blame for eroding rules which frowned upon premarital pregnancy, bad language and disrespectful behaviour.

The attention paid over recent decades to civil liberty has played its part in the lawlessness Magnus Linklater describes. Because of the loosening of legal restraints and withdrawal of discipline (especially in schools), police and teachers are no longer the figures of respect they once were. Many parents of delinquent children cynically reinforce this attitude. Urgent action to put the responsibility back on to them by means of legal and financial penalties is imperative if we are to stop this decline.

Yours sincerely,  
JULIE DANIELS,  
9 Leam Road, E14,  
April 12

### Justice at Strasbourg

From Sir Michael Davies

Sir, We should all wish Lord Maccay of Clashfern well in his attempt to curb the wild excesses of the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg (report, April 9). This court suffers from three fatal defects.

First, there is no appeal from its decisions: unchecked tribunals at any level inevitably become arrogant and self-satisfied. Second, most of its judges are academics, who are notoriously bad at judging. Third, its rulings and language make it clear that its judges are not truly independent but fanatically devoted to the federalistic concept.

Unless these problems are firmly addressed and radically solved, the future is gloomy indeed.

Yours faithfully,  
MICHAEL DAVIES,  
6 Stone Buildings,  
Lincoln's Inn, WC2,  
April 9

### Blasphemy law

From Mr John Bell

Sir, Mr Roy Edey writes (letter, April 10) that "it is necessary for the protection of society to have criminal sanctions against an insult so grave to one's faith that it is likely to cause a breach of the peace".

What happened to "turning the other cheek"?

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN BELL,  
The Hall, Thirsk, North Yorkshire,  
April 10

Business letters, page 29

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

### Modern means of attracting youngsters to the Church

From Mr John Pearman

Sir, You are probably correct in arguing (leading article, "The empty pew", April 11) that restless innovation will not reverse the Anglican Church's decline.

In the Dark Ages Christianity moved into the monasteries. In medieval times it moved out of the monasteries into the parish churches. What we are now seeing is Christianity moving out of the churches into the real world. Perhaps it is our young people who are the first to sense this healthy and necessary evolution.

Twenty-five years of teaching religious studies in boys' secondary schools has taught me that modern teenagers are becoming more rather than less spiritual in their modes of intellect. But their interest is in Christianity, not in "churchianity" or priestcraft.

Most present-day youngsters are influenced more by spiritually-minded human beings engaged in the real world than by priests. Educated teenagers, particularly those who have attended church schools, don't seem to know what priests are for.

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN PEARMAN,  
10 Hamlet Court,  
23 Village Road, Enfield, Middlesex,  
April 11

From Mr David Burgin

Sir, I was concerned to read (report, April 11) that the Church of England is concerned about the drop in younger members because it "threatens the future of Anglicanism".

This surely highlights the reason for the drop, in that the Church is more concerned about its own future than bringing the good news about God's love to young people to save them from a future of hopelessness.

From Mr Allan Levy, QC

Sir, Rachel Campbell-Johnston's article, "An end to child sex tourism" (April 10), repeated the strong recommendations put forward at a Sieff Foundation conference on the topic held in London last February: in particular that the proposed government-backed legislation should be amended to permit the courts here to try alleged sex offences committed against children overseas.

Ironically, in wrongly stating that child prostitution is "ruthlessly legislated against in Britain, but people travel abroad... to feed their tastes", Ms Campbell-Johnston identifies by default one of the great scandals in this country in the 1990s: the extent of child prostitution in our cities and particularly the fact that many of the children are in care. That these children, clearly identified in recent reports and television programmes, are not better helped and protected is a national disgrace and requires urgent attention.

A strong argument against limiting the legislation to conspiracy or incitement to commit sexual acts outside the UK is that research shows that most

With this attitude we don't even deserve the young people we have got and have drifted very far from Christ's great commission to take the love of God into the whole world.

Yours faithfully,  
DAVID BURGIN,  
Brookdale,  
64 Longhurst Lane,  
Marple Bridge, Stockport, Cheshire,  
April 12

From Mr Giles Wingate-Saul, QC

Sir, A greater involvement of ordinary members will probably take the Church back nearer its roots. At St Paul's, Rusland, we parishioners take our own family services once a month; none of us who take them is trained.

We aim to ensure that the children in this tiny parish enjoy the service and that it contains some Christian message usually more to do with conduct than with catechism. Afterwards they play "dig" in the churchyard and I like to think that those who lie there enjoy their laughter.

The children ring the bell. (We have had to mend the rope twice, they are so keen.) They like to take the collection; in short they like to be involved. We will attract children only if we involve them in our worship. If we preach at them we make life more difficult for ourselves.

We have no parish priest but a retired canon takes our monthly Communion service and tries to ensure that we do not stumble.

Is the real issue not what the Church can do for us and our young but what we can do for the Church?

Yours truly,  
G. W. WINGATE-SAUL,  
The Down House, Whitstock,  
Rusland, Ulverston, Cumbria,  
April 12

From the Reverend B. H. Adams

Sir, There is much to agree with in your leader. Certainly more "resources" will not attract young people to our churches and the preaching of the gospel is vital, but I cannot think that salvation lies simply in the King James version and the Book of Common Prayer.

There are many reasons why young people are not in our churches: peer pressure (it is not "cool" to go to church); lack of parental example; the erosion of Sunday as a day apart; greater mobility; sport and leisure activities; the shortage of and pressure on clergy so that young people get little of their time; a lack of Christian youth leaders; the collapse of Christianity in the secondary schools and so on.

Young people do have a deep interest in Christianity, as evidenced by thousands who attend Greenbelt, Spring Harvest and Soul Survivor, national events which the media seem to ignore or disparage. In our three country parishes we have a group of young people who meet each Sunday evening. Last month they organised a successful weekend specifically to evangelise their peers.

The Church, I believe, must make room for young people to worship in their own style. As they mature they come to see the value of more structured worship. It is important to maintain a variety of liturgies, with the King James version and Book of Common prayer as important ingredients, but it is a deep cultural change which is at the heart of the problem and we cannot simply put the clock back.

Yours faithfully,  
BRIAN ADAMS,  
The Vicarage,  
Butleigh, Glastonbury, Somerset,  
April 11

### Legislation to protect children and deter the 'sex tourist'

so-called sex tourists travel independently or on ordinary package tours and not in groups organised for unlawful sexual purposes.

The Government has a strong duty to follow the example of 12 other countries, including New Zealand, Australia and the USA, and pass extraterritorial legislation.

Yours faithfully,  
ALLAN LEVY,  
17 Bedford Row, WC1,  
April 10

From Ms Anne Badger

Sir, Rachel Campbell-Johnston's article highlighted the reluctance of the British Government, because of the perceived practical difficulties involved, to follow the lead taken by 12 other tourist-sending countries in introducing legislation which would enable the prosecution in British courts of those who travel abroad to sexually exploit children.

These other countries clearly believe any practical difficulties can be overcome and are not real obstacles to such legislation. Australia has two prosecutions under way, using its legislation.

Other countries continue to follow the example and similar legislation will soon be passed in Italy and Ireland. Last week Canada's Foreign Minister announced to the UN Human Rights Commission that Canada, too, is now pledged to introduce this extraterritorial legislation, and made reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as providing a sufficient basis for this extension of jurisdiction to deal specifically with child sex tourism.

Britain ratified this Convention in 1991. The Coalition on Child Prostitution and Tourism, which represents seven major charities, believes that surely, with the forthcoming World Congress in Stockholm, it is now time for the Government to move beyond reluctance to positive action and introduce legislation to target child sex offenders in Britain.

Yours sincerely,  
ANNE BADGER  
(Campaign Co-ordinator),  
Coalition on Child Prostitution  
and Tourism),  
Unit 4, The Stableyard,  
Broomgrove Road, SW9,  
April 10

### Saudi dissident

From Mr J. S. F. Parker

Sir, Like Mr Robin Morris (letter, April 9) I have lived and worked in Middle Eastern countries, but I cannot follow the sequence of his thought that aliens in those countries are rightly penalised for breaking their laws and his seeming to want such "rules" applied in Great Britain.

How does he know that the people of Saudi Arabia "do not wish" to have a culture anything like that of the West? Have their wishes been consulted?

Yours obedient servant,  
JOHN PARKER,  
8 Holly Terrace, York,  
April 9

### Pining away

From Mrs Henry Moore

Sir, Your Deaths announcements for April 11 include that of the sudden demise of Pine, Corsican, aged 110 years. Although not as old as that planted at Arley Castle, Worcestershire, in 1820 (*Beau's Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles*, 1976) it is touching that it was so treasured as to rank an entry in your columns.

I hope the mourner will plant a successor to be equally loved by generations to come.

Yours faithfully,  
CECILY MOORE,  
Shucknall Court, Hereford,  
April 12

### Never too late

From Mr John Orton

Sir, The good news in today's *Times* is the job ad for Voluntary Service Overseas that specifies an upper age limit of 70 years. The bad news is that it is unpaid ("a modest living allowance") and that the locations on offer are Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia or Nepal.

Well, beggars can't be choosers, I suppose.

Yours etc,  
JOHN ORTON,  
37 Chadacre Avenue,  
Clayhall, Ilford, Essex,  
April 15

### BSE and cattle cull

From the President of the British Veterinary Association

Sir, In light of the British Veterinary Association's views on the unnecessary culling of cattle in the UK (report, April 15) I have today written to the Minister of Agriculture and the Secretary of State for Health explaining what the veterinary profession feels are the next steps.

Our joint priorities are animal health and welfare and public health. BSE is a reality in cattle terms but the link with CJD in humans is a perception. Yet it is that perception that could send tens of thousands of cattle to slaughter.

Science that the public can appreciate must reassure itself. That is the

### Library at risk

From Ms Susan Howatch and others

Sir, Our concerns about the public library service in this country have recently been exacerbated by Westminster City Council's plans to close Great Smith Street Library, believed to be the oldest library in London.

Over the last year this excellent, heavily used library has been deliberately run down: opening hours have been shortened and the number of permanent staff halved, the reference library scarcely exists, the inquiry desk is staffed only at peak times and the lending book stock tragically depleted. The one part of the library that has grown is the entertainment section — videos, CDs and cassettes, mostly of a popular nature.

Public libraries are apparently now

run by the recreation and leisure committees of local authorities, who seem to care nothing for their educational value. Local councils are clearly not fit to run this indispensable service, so there must be some control from central government. It is a question not only of money but of policy too. Libraries are essential for education.

In the meantime, will the Government step in to save and restore Great Smith Street Library before it is too late?

Yours faithfully,  
SUSAN HOWATCH,  
SYBILLE BEDFORD,  
DIRK BOGARDE,  
WILLIS HALL,  
WILLIAM TREVOR,  
JOANNA TROLLOPE,  
42 Great Smith Street, SW1,  
April 9

### One or the other

From Mrs C. A. R. Lancelyn Green

Sir, When my students are all ready to start a lesson, they have not already started (Mr Gershon Ellenbogen's letter, April 12). When they recite all together, it can sound altogether splendid. If they play tag, they can't all be "it", albeit they are a bit old for such games.

I hope, when they answer their test questions, they get the answers all

right, merely getting them alright would not satisfy my high standards.

People like Mr Ellenbogen should pay more attention to the differences between adverbs and pronouns before trying to alter spellings. The colloquial alright, meaning "OK" or acceptable, does not mean the same as all right, and I hope it never does.

Yours faithfully,  
C. A. R. LANCELYN GREEN,  
Poulton Hall,  
Poulton Lancelyn, Bebbington, Wirral.











## Maladministration by trustees

**Wild v Pensions Ombudsman**

Before Mr Justice Carnwath  
(Judgment April 2)

When a pension scheme gave trustees power to make a lump sum payment to dependants of a deceased member, the trustees had not properly exercised their discretion when they made the payment to a person who had cohabited with the deceased and who was dependent on him out of choice rather than out of necessity.

Mr Timothy Carlisle for Mr Wild; Mr Nicholas Randall for the Ombudsman.

MR JUSTICE CARNWATH said that the deceased, Keith Hindle-Smith, was a member and also a trustee of the scheme which was established by a trust deed made in June 1985 for the benefit of the employees and directors of Monoc International Ltd.

He had then completed a lump sum death benefit nomination form stating that in the event of his death he wished the benefit to be

divided equally between his son, Anthony Smith, and his daughter, Tracey Hartley. The deceased died intestate in August 1995.

The rules of the fund provided that in the event of death before the age of 75 the trustees had power to pay the benefit to the "dependants, relatives or legal personal representatives of the member".

In the period before his death, the deceased, who was divorced, had lived with Mrs Carol Slack.

The appellant and the two other trustees decided to exercise their discretion in relation to the £140,000 standing to the credit of the deceased by paying £80,000 in cash to Mrs Slack and by establishing a trust fund of £60,000, with the income to be paid to Mrs Slack for life and the deceased's two children to be entitled to the capital in equal shares the event of her death.

The deceased's son complained to the Occupational Pensions Advisory Service who referred the matter to the Pensions Ombudsman. The appellant had by then retired as a trustee but continued to deal with the matter.

The Ombudsman ruled that the trustees' reasons for exercising their discretion in favour of Mrs Slack as "being the lady with whom the deceased had been living for some time" did not of itself suggest that she was financially dependent on the deceased.

neither did the facts that he was paying the household bills at his address or that he had spent some of his own money to refurbish a cottage which she owned.

The Ombudsman held that there had been no valid exercise of discretion by the trustees and ordered that the full amount of the benefit be paid to the son as legal personal representative.

He further ordered that each trustee pay £500 to the deceased's son and daughter to compensate them for their "injustice beyond pecuniary loss involving distress and inconvenience as a result of the trustees' maladministration".

His Lordship said that the Ombudsman was correct in his decision as to Mrs Slack's dependency. There was no evidence before the trustees, or indeed the Ombudsman, that she was not able to look after herself if required to do so. As she explained, she gave up her financial independence in response to the deceased's wishes, but that was a matter of choice and not of necessity.

Although the Ombudsman did not specifically distinguish between his two functions under the Pension Act 1995, he gave up her financial independence in response to the deceased's wishes, but that was a matter of choice and not of necessity.

He was perfectly entitled to conclude that the trustees had not investigated the matter as they should have and that that constituted maladministration.

As to how appropriate it was to order the appellant to pay compensation to the children, his Lordship said that it was important that before making such an order the Ombudsman should take into account who ultimately was going to bear the cost of the compensation.

The Ombudsman was unaware that the appellant had ceased to be a trustee. The pension scheme clearly provided that a trustee was not to be held personally liable in the absence of dishonesty or wilful breach.

The draftsman of that clause did not have in mind the possibility of awards for distress and inconvenience. There was nothing which would justify imposing a personal liability on a trustee contrary to the clear intention of the trust deed which was the basis upon which he undertook his trust.

It would be wrong to allow the award against the appellant to stand unless and until the Ombudsman had satisfied himself that it would not result in a personal liability on the appellant which would not be met out of the trust fund.

Solicitors: Rayfields; John Yolland, Putney.

**Regina v Islington London Borough Council, Ex parte Rixon**

Before Mr Justice Sedley  
(Judgment March 15)

A local authority exercising its duty to arrange for recreational and gateway educational facilities for a disabled person was obliged to take into account practice guidance issued by the Department of Health.

Further, in reaching its decision as to the provision of care services to a disabled person in need, a local authority could not depart without good reason from the policy guidance issued by the secretary of state. Where the disabled person had learning difficulties, the local authority must conscientiously take into account non-statutory guidance from the Department of Education.

Mr Justice Sedley so stated in the Queen's Bench Division in a reserved judgment when allowing an application for judicial review by Jonathan Rixon, by his mother and next friend Stephanie Rixon, of a decision of the London Borough of Islington received in late February 1995 as to the provision, inter alia, of community care services.

His Lordship granted declarations requiring that in exercising its powers and duties under the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 and section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 the local authority take into account the practice guidance issued by the Department of Health and stating that it had acted unlawfully in carrying out its duty under section 47(1)(b) of the 1990 Act in deviating without good reason from the policy guidance issued under section 7 of the 1970 Act by the secretary of state.

Miss Jennifer Richards for Mr Rixon; Mr Roger McCarthy for the local authority.

MR JUSTICE SEDLEY said that section 47 of the 1990 Act created a duty to assess the needs of a disabled person and to decide what local authority provision they called for, but not to implement the decision.

Section 2(1) of the 1970 Act created the principal duty to respond to assessed need. It was a positive duty to arrange for recreational and gateway educational facilities for disabled persons. It was a duty owed to the individuals and not simply a target duty.

Section 2(1) incorporated in turn the provisions of section 7(1) of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 which obliged local authorities to act under the general guidance of the secretary of state.

In his Lordship's judgment, Parliament in enacting section 7(1) did not intend local authorities to whom ministerial guidance was given to be free, having considered

it, to take it or leave it. A local authority was required to follow the path charted by the secretary of state's guidance, with liberty to deviate from it where the local authority judged on admissible grounds that there was a good reason to do so, but without freedom to take a substantially different course. The ministerial guidance was *Caring for People: Community Care in the New Decade and Beyond: Policy Guidance* (HMSO 1990).

A failure to comply with the statutory policy guidance was unlawful and could be corrected by judicial review: see *R v North Yorkshire County Council, Ex parte Hargreaves* (The Times November 9, 1994).

A failure to comply with a review panel's recommendations was not by itself a breach of the law; but the greater the departure, the greater the need for cogent articulated reasons if the court was not to infer that the panel's recommendations had been overlooked.

A second source of considerations which manifestly had to be taken into account was the practice guidance issued by the Department of Health in 1994, the form of a practitioners' guide entitled *Care Management and Assessment* (HMSO, fifth impression, 1994), which outlined a set of principles derived from current views of practice.

The guidance counselled against trimming the assessment of need to fit the available provision. That properly reflected the law.

There were two points at which, in his Lordship's judgment, the authority had fallen below the requirements of the law. The first concerned the relationship of need to availability.

As Lord Justice McCowan had stated in *R v Gloucestershire County Council, Ex parte Mahfood* (The Times June 21, 1995), the section 2(1) exercise was needed and not resources-led. The authority had not undertaken anything like the exercise of adjusting provision to need described in *Ex parte Mahfood*.

The second concerned a failure to comply with the policy guidance. If that guidance was to be departed from it must be with good reason, articulated in the course of some identifiable decision-making process even if not in the care plan itself.

The care plan also failed at a number of points to comply with the practice guidance. While such guidance lacked the status accorded by section 7 of the 1970 Act it was something to which regard must be had in carrying out the statutory functions.

There was a duty under section 41 of the Education Act 1944 to secure provision for adequate educational facilities for a person

over school age with learning difficulties.

That duty was a target duty and in the present case the local authority was in breach by failing to secure provision for persons with difficulties as severe as Mr Rixon's.

While it was at least conceivable that a local authority might conclude that in relation to some with the gravest learning difficulties, the duty under section 41 of the 1944 Act could be met by provision under section 2 of the 1970 Act, it was not for the court to adjudicate on whether Mr Rixon had certain educational needs capable of being met which were not co-extensive with the recreational facilities called for by section 2 of the 1970 Act.

However, it was something which the local authority had to take very seriously and assess with care and sensitivity.

For reasons given earlier in relation to non-statutory guidance, the local authority had conscientiously to take into account the circular issued by the Department of Education in coming to its decision (Circular 1/93, issued January 5, 1993).

In the event of an alleged breach of section 41 of the 1944 Act, the proper recourse was to appeal to the secretary of state.

Solicitors: Ms Marion Chester; Ms Marie Rosenthal, Islington.

## No interest on premature tax assessment

**Billingham (Inspector of Taxes) v Myers**

Before Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Aldous and Sir John Balcombe

(Judgment March 27)

An assessment raised under section 88 of the Taxes Management Act 1970 on interest on tax recovered to make good loss due to taxpayer's fault, at a time when the tax could still be paid on or before the due date, albeit that the neglect of the taxpayer had caused the Crown to lose its right to recover it on that date.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment dismissing an appeal by the Crown from the decision of Mr Justice Knox (The Times December 6, 1994; [1994] STC 1016) that had upheld a determination of HM Revenue & Customs allowing interest on tax recovered to make good loss of tax and thus the tax charged could not carry interest under section 88(1).

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment dismissing an appeal by the Crown from the decision of Mr Justice Knox (The Times December 6, 1994; [1994] STC 1016) that had upheld a determination of HM Revenue & Customs allowing interest on tax recovered to make good loss of tax and thus the tax charged could not carry interest under section 88(1).

Section 88 of the 1970 Act, now substituted by sections 159, 160 and 179 of the Finance Act 1989, provides: "(1) Where an assessment has been made for the purpose of making good to the Crown a loss of tax wholly or partly attributable to the neglect of any person, the tax charged by the assessment... shall carry interest at the prescribed rate from the date on which the tax ought to have been paid until payment."

Section 7 of the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979 provides: "Capital gains tax assessed on any person in respect of gains accruing in any year shall be payable by that person on or before 1 December following the end of that year, or at the expiration of a period of 30 days beginning with the date of the issue of the notice of assessment, whichever is the later."

Mr Alan Moses, QC and Mr Timothy Brennan for the Crown; Mr Kevin Prosser for Mr Myers.

LORD JUSTICE NOURSE said that the appeal raised a question of construction on section 88(1) of the 1970 Act. The authorities established that there could be "a loss of tax" if tax was paid late.

The question was whether an assessment was "made for the purpose of making good to the Crown a loss of tax" if it was made at a time when the tax could still be paid on or before the due date, albeit that the neglect of the taxpayer had caused the Crown to lose its right to recover it on that date.

The taxpayer's return was issued to him on April 6, 1988, requiring its return within 30 days. He sent it to the Revenue on November 1, 1988. The taxpayer accepted that that amounted to "neglect" on his part.

On November 7 the assessment was issued. It followed from section 7 of the 1979 Act that the tax assessed was not payable until December 7. Had it not been for the taxpayer's neglect, the assessment could have been made on or before November 1 and the tax would have been payable on December 1.

Both sides were agreed that the question whether an assessment fell within section 88(1) or not had to be judged as at the date on which it was made. As at November 7 the tax might or might not be paid on or before December 1.

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As the millennium approaches, television programme-makers are becoming obsessed with the paranormal

When I predicted that 1996 would see the outbreak of millenarianism, I never thought it would be so bad. As the magic date approaches, the supernatural is all over our screens, and I'm not just talking about Anne and Nick's *Good Morning* phone-in on extra-terrestrials yesterday. Ghosts, ghosts and flying saucers are now being publicised by the BBC as, if you please, "fact".

There are no ghosts. I thought this was a generally accepted fact — not a controversial proposition such as "There is no God". But the BBC's current series, *Secrets of the Paranormal*, prepared by its first on-the-ground Community Programme Unit, allows mystic-communers to proclaim, unchallenged, their unearthly powers. Tomorrow night will give us Raymond, a man who, putting on a funny voice and staring at the camera in a meaningful way, tells

## The BBC is losing touch with reality

us he is also "Paul", the ghost of a doctor who died 2,000 years ago. Fair enough. If Raymond thinks he is inhabited by Paul, no matter — unless, as in one of the most repellent scenes I have seen offered for early-evening television, he burrows loopy fingers into an ailing old man's pasty flesh, and claims to locate the bladder.

Raymond says cheerfully that he has never had any medical training but Paul did, 2,000 years ago (that magic number). Whereupon Paul speaks up: "There's no difference between me and conventional doctors... Just because I'm dead shouldn't make any difference."

It should make a difference to the BBC. The national broadcasting organisation ought not to be putting out this rubbish. At very

least the BBC should append a health warning, or an earnest studio discussion of the kind that followed Joan Bakewell's discovery in the Holy Land, in time for Easter, of tombs marked Jesus, Mary and Joseph. (If BBC's *Heart of the Matter* does not win a Comedy of the Year award for this account of Joan's descent into the sepulchre, there is no justice).

Context is all, you'll agree. The realm of mystery is universally popular: witness the success of *The X-Files*, a hot favourite now on both Sky and the BBC. But the unexplainable as entertainment is one thing. David Copperfield claims only to be an illusionist, performing wondrous tricks we can't understand. Uri Geller, on the other hand, claims psychic

powers and gets next week's *Secrets of the Paranormal* all to himself to claim, among other things, the healing power of his "energised" teddy bears.

More of the same comes in July, with *Our of This World*, another six-parter on ghosts, poltergeists

and psychic or out-of-body experiences. It promises a balanced look at the unexplained — that is, it will give equal weight to the sceptics. Is this balance? To present science as just another point of view?

In June, to be sure, the BBC will offer *Strange Days*, an inquiry into modern superstition. It is hardly reassuring, however, that this inquiry into "the retreat from reason" will take in both alternative medicine and psychotherapy — treatments provided by the NHS.

The BBC needs to apply the smack of firm editorship if this phantasmic tendency is not to get out of hand before the year 2000. Some things are still beyond the pale: wrestling, shopping, stripping. Ghostly communicating belongs there too, especially when

you consider the basis of its appeal — hope offered to those suffering from incurable illness or grief.

The placard-wavers on last week's *Secrets of the Paranormal* demanded the public's right to know what "secret" information the Ministry of Defence holds on UFOs. Oh yes.

Meanwhile, the documents of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, the publication of which has landed *The Economist* in hot water, show the commission about to approve two giant power mergers knowing that these are not in the public interest. The report, prepared for the Department of Trade and Industry, also reveals that one of the MMC's advisers, Patricia Hodgson, the

BBC's director of policy and planning, courageously dissented from the decision, pointing out that the mergers would put up the price of electricity. What better information to keep from the public?

The hoary old official argument — that outsiders will not give advice to government agencies unless they are assured of secrecy — has been demolished by the one regulatory agency worthy of the name. Ofel, the telecommunications watchdog. When it invites opinions on proposed policies, Ofel asks that the responses submitted be allowed to be made public. It will promise confidentiality on request, but gives warning that such views may then be given less weight because they are not open to challenge.

Now there's an idea for the BBC. How about "Secrets of Government Departments"? A series that would unquestionably come from beyond the Great Divide.



BRENDA MADDOX

## Is Auntie even-handed?

Alexandra Frean on television's political coverage

No one was more surprised to read on the front page of yesterday's *Daily Mail* that BBC interviewers were too "soft" on Labour politicians, than the two people who were supposed to have made the accusation.

Lord Skidelsky, a former SDP member now on the Left of the Tory party, and Jean Lambert, a Green Party activist, had been invited by the BBC to analyse the corporation's political output.

Having studied a selection of television and radio programmes, they had indeed expressed doubts about whether the BBC "tested all parties with equal rigour". They concluded that the corporation's interviewers "failed to test Labour politicians... by allowing them to avoid elaborating on their alternatives to government policies and by failing to question whether big changes that they proposed were really needed".

The two singled out a February edition of BBC's *On the Record*, in which Peter Mandelson, MP, adviser to Tony Blair, was interviewed by John Humphrys. Mr Mandelson had been more closely questioned about his view that there should be "super ministries" to oversee Whitehall, they said.

What surprised Skidelsky and Lambert was not that their supposedly confidential report should have been leaked to the *Daily Mail*, but that their remarks on political



Female interviewers such as Kirsty Wark, left, and Sue MacGregor are better at getting politicians to stick to the point



impartiality should have assumed headline proportions. "My view really was that the BBC and the rest of the media do not just report news. They create it," Skidelsky says. "I never thought of this exercise as a news event, but I have been rung up by ten newspapers about it. A news item has been made out of nothing. This is a prime example of what I was saying."

If the BBC does have a tendency to be more intimidating towards the Tories than the other parties, Skidelsky believes, it is not so much due to an inherent left-wing bias, but simply "because the Tories have more to answer for as they are in power". The main thrust of Skidelsky's analysis

concerns not impartiality, but the fact that the BBC's coverage has become overly reliant on superficial soundbites, which encourage politicians to tailor their discourse. Head-to-head interviews in particular have become knockabout and point-scoring "sporting spectacles", which often fail to inform or stimulate.

Skidelsky and Lambert believe that by adopting a lower-key style of interviewing, women interviewers, such as Sue MacGregor and Kirsty Wark, are more effective than men at getting politicians to address issues and stick to the point. Lambert's spokeswoman says her comments about political impartiality have been taken "massively out of context". More important, she says, is the report's conclusion that the BBC's political coverage focuses too much on Westminster with journalists and politicians sharing the same narrow agenda.

As Skidelsky and Lambert believe it would be healthy for political leaders not to assume that anything they say would be automatically covered by the BBC, they suggest the corporation drops its coverage of Prime Minister's Questions for a six-month trial. The BBC denies the specific charge that it was too soft on Mr Mandelson, but recognises the need for rigorous testing of all politicians from all sides.

Tony Hall, head of news and current affairs at the BBC,

Melvyn Marckus on the tycoon's new weekend read

ACCORDING to financial folklore the archetypal tycoon arrives at his desk at 6am and moves at least one mountain before ordinary mortals report for duty.

Sunday, the day of rest, presumably represents a dread prospect for such businessmen, but since the birth of the Sunday business sections, led by *The Sunday Times*, Fleet Street has striven to fill the void.

Sunday business journalism represents a business in itself. The broadsheets, led on circulation by *The Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Telegraph*, compete for exclusive financial news. In the business arena, knowledge often equates to power, and any business section that is perceived as a must-read enjoys a guaranteed audience. Nor would any drawing room be complete on Sunday without a few inches of money and personal-finance supplement.

Enter, as of this Sunday, a new contender for the coffee table: *Sunday Business*. Just below the masthead, on the "dummy" currently doing the media rounds, a profound six-word message reads: "All the business news you need."

This is a highly contentious claim, but with six sections in its armoury, *Sunday Business* can hardly be accused of skimping.

A degree of mystery surrounds the publication: Tom Rubythorn, the founder Editor of *Sunday Business*, and former Editor of *Business*, has remained exceedingly coy as to the identity of backers for the £12 million project. Initial working-capital requirements are understood to have been met out of the £3 million that VNU, the Dutch publisher, is reputed to have paid for *Business* last year. Rubythorn, 40, admits he is "not too keen" to discuss

## Joining the business of Sunday morning



Rubythorn's dummy issue

### SUNDAY READING

Average business readership:

- 1 Sunday Times 317,000
- 2 Mail on Sunday 241,000
- 3 Sunday Express 129,000
- 4 Sunday Telegraph 126,000
- 5 Observer 102,000
- 6 Independent on Sun 76,000

Source: BMRB British Business Survey 1995. Weighted by population

shareholders, but confirms a "close relationship" with the Bloomberg wire service. This close relationship is reflected in *Sunday Business*'s section-four offering, *Bloomberg Trading Week*, a financial section designed for City professionals.

Whatever the identity of the backers, some £1 million will be poured into television advertising during this week, with a similar sum expended over the ensuing six weeks.

A breakdown of *Sunday Business*'s veritable mountain of paper represents no mean task. The front page of the broadsheet cover-section looks remarkably like certain established rivals, and, according to the blurb, "several scoops" will appear each week. *Business & Fortune* is a tabloid colour supplement highlighting stories "based on people". A diary by Peter de Savary is threatened. *Money & Life*, supplement three, mingles the Peps and the Tassas with lifestyle, in the shape of travel, property, motoring and entertaining. After *Bloomberg* comes a *Computer Age* supplement, edited by John Lamb, former Editor of *Computer Weekly*. *Appointments* heralds "a host of top job opportunities." The price of all this? 85p.

According to Rubythorn, *Sunday Business* requires a circulation of 150,000 to break even. The make-or-buy factor will be the calibre of those "scoops." City practitioners are hard taskmasters.

The Sunday broadsheets are used to competition — and to seeing it off. It was no coincidence that *The Sunday Times* last week launched a Stock Market Challenge with weekly prizes worth £10,000 and also published its annual survey of Britain's rich — or that *The Mail on Sunday* published its 32-page serialisation of a new biography of the Queen inside its business section. *The Sunday Telegraph* is also being revamped this weekend.

The best *Sunday Business* can expect, in respect of the City professional market, is to become a second buy to one of the established Sunday papers with strong business sections. If Rubythorn can persuade 150,000 buyers to do that, he could succeed — but his rivals don't rate his chances.

Which companies do Britain's top earners rate? Alex Benady finds some surprising answers

Even the upper-middle classes aspire. You might therefore expect their favourite brand names to be luxury goods — perhaps Aspreys, Rolls-Royce or Gucci. The truth, however, is far more mundane. According to Premier TGI, a definitive new survey, the well-heeled hold their grocers and foreign car manufacturers in the highest regard.

Marks & Spencer emerges as the company rated most highly in a survey of 5,500 professionals and senior managers, the elite "ABs" of marketing parlance. Sainsbury checks in at number two with arch rival Tesco at number five. Mercedes, BMW and Volvo earn third, fourth and tenth place respectively.

Two media companies, the establishment BBC and relative newcomer Walt Disney, put in appearances at number six and seven, and the ubiquitous Virgin pops up at number eight.

Precisely why Mars gains ninth place in the bourgeois

## Hey, big spender



ABs love foreign cars

THE AB FAVOURITES	
The ten companies most highly rated by all ABs	The ten most highly rated by AB Times readers
1 Marks & Spencer	1 Microsoft
2 Sainsbury	2 Renault
3 Mercedes	3 Nike
4 BMW	4 Esso
5 Tesco	5 Unilever
6 BBC	6 Peugeot Talbot
7 Disney	7 Mercedes
8 Virgin	8 Body Shop
9 Mars	9 British Airways
10 Volvo	10 Saab

pantheon is likely to remain a mystery. "The survey is not concerned with finding out why people like things, so much as identifying in detail what people like," says Steve Cooke of BMRB International, which carried out the survey. However, according to Mr

Jones, familiarity is the one thing that all the top ten companies have in common. "They are brand names which people encounter every day and they deliver consistently," he says.

The results may give the top companies a warm glow but

the significance of this survey goes way beyond a mere popularity poll. There are ten million ABs in the UK, accounting for 22 per cent of the population. Although the term AB refers to occupation, not wealth, they have an average household income of

£31,000 a year compared with the national average of £19,000. So they account for at least a third of all spending more in some luxury markets.

What's more, because they have positions of power and authority, ABs often set the agenda for what the remaining three quarters of the population should consume.

The problem for marketers is that ABs are notoriously hard to reach with advertising. They watch just two thirds the average amount of commercial television, and they are often fiercely resistant to its blandishments. "You have to know exactly what they watch, what they read and what they consume," explains Glen Parker, media researcher at advertising agency J. Walter Thompson.

The exercise reveals that the British upper-middle classes are not quite the homogeneous bunch you might have thought. For instance, *Times* readers are decidedly modern and cosmopolitan in the companies they rate highly.

March 25 to March 31, 1996				
Programme	Date	Time	Channel	Genre
1 The 1996 Grand National	Sat 30	15.00	BBC1	Horse Racing
2 1996 Grand National Re-run	Sat 30	16.20	BBC1	Horse Racing
3 Match Of The Day Live	Sun 31	13.15	BBC1	Football
4 Brazilian Grand Prix	Sat 30	16.45	BBC2	Motor Racing
5 Final Score	Sat 30	17.05	BBC1	Composite
6 Brazilian Grand Prix	Sat 30	18.00	BBC1	Motor Racing
7 Grandstand	Sat 30	13.15	BBC1	Composite
8 Match Of The Day	Sun 31	22.21	BBC1	Football
9 Sportsnight	Wed 27	22.25	BBC1	Composite
10 Grandstand: Football Focus	Sat 30	12.25	BBC1	Football
11 Big Fight	Sat 30	23.49	ITV	Boxing
12 Inter Football - Eng v Bul	Wed 27	20.00	SKY5	Football
13 FA Cup - Liverpool v Aston V	Sun 31	16.00	SKY5	Football
14 Racing From Aintree	Mon 25	16.01	BBC2	Horse Racing
15 Grand Prix Highlights	Sun 31	22.21	BBC2	Motor Racing
16 The Greatest	Sat 30	20.30	CH44	Composite
17 Champions League Special	Sat 30	13.13	ITV	Football
18 Rugby Special	Sun 31	15.45	BBC2	Rugby
19 FA Cup Final	Mon 25	20.00	SKY5	Football
20 NBA Raw	Thu 26	18.00	CH44	Basketball

BMRB (Broadcasters' Audience Research Board) and Associated: 01223-322828. Copyright: unauthorized reproduction. Repeated transmissions not aggregated. Highest editions per week only. \*incomplete network transmissions.

## Keeping hold of the magnificent eight

AS the Commons debate on the Broadcasting Bill reopens this week, attention is focusing again on the issue of sports rights and on the eight "listed" events that are currently protected for terrestrial television.

The eight are the Grand National, the Wimbledon finals weekend, the FA Cup Final, The Scottish FA Cup Final, The Olympic Games, The FIFA World Cup Finals, the home Test cricket and the Derby.

Although the World Cup

and the Olympics tend to get the highest audiences, the Grand National regularly comes a close third. This year's audience of 11.2 million is slightly down on 1995's 11.9 million and considerably lower than the 1994 figure of 16 million.

It is, however, well within the event's 10 million to 16 million average audience. In addition, this year the event took a spectacular 78 per cent share of the available audience.

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A reproduction sepia photograph with a gold border shows the future King George VI and Queen Mother when they were the Duke and Duchess of York, with Princess Elizabeth, born on April 21, 1926. Affixed next to the photograph is a genuine mint George VI stamp.

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Josephine Barstow in marvellous voice as Medea



HOMES 41

Steve and Rachel Overt are selling their stately pile



SPORT 43-48

Simon Barnes on why Manchester finally saw red

TELEVISION AND RADIO  
Pages 46,47

# THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY APRIL 17 1996

## C&W delays filling top post while BT talks continue

By ERIC REGULY

MERGER negotiations between Cable and Wireless and British Telecom have reached the point that C&W has put the appointment of a new chief executive on hold.

It has also emerged that the top executives of the two companies met yesterday in an effort to speed up the negotiations, aimed at creating a £35 billion global telecoms player

with a strong presence in Asia, America and Europe.

The merger talks have been much more extensive than previously believed. The heads of the companies' various departments, including finance, regulation and strategy, have been meeting regularly in an effort to determine how their activities should best come together.

Sir Peter Bonfield, the chief executive of BT, and Sir Iain Vallance, the

chairman, met with Rod Olsen, the acting chief executive of C&W, and Brian Smith, the chairman, at BT's headquarters in London. Sir Peter and Mr Smith had been in contact with each other before the meeting.

Until yesterday, BT insisted that its senior executives had not been in contact with each other since the initial round of negotiations collapsed last month and that any talks that did occur were largely limited

to the financial advisers. BT's main adviser is N M Rothschild; C&W's is Goldman Sachs.

C&W had been looking for a chief executive since last November, when the board asked James Ross and Lord Young of Graffham, who was chairman, to leave. Lord Young was replaced by Mr Smith.

C&W then said it hoped to have the new chief executive in place by March. The merger talks, however,

have made the appointment unnecessary. C&W would not hire someone for a position that might disappear in a few months. Similarly, no candidate would be interested in a "caretaker" position.

C&W has an American candidate in mind but would ask him to join only if talks break down, forcing the company to pursue an independent strategy. If the companies combine, Sir Peter, the former ICL chairman

who replaced Sir Iain as BT's chief executive in January, would become chief executive of the merged group.

The companies hope to have an agreement in principle within a few months. Deutsche Telekom would be a top candidate for Mercury, which C&W owns but would have to sell if it merged with BT. The German company said last week that creating a British business is a priority.

### BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FT-SE 100	3825.3	(+34.8)
Yield	3.89%	
FT-SE All share	1802.18	(+17.87)
Nikkei	2188.17	(-14.87)
Dow Jones	5611.35	(+18.43)*
S&P Composite	644.89	(+2.40)*
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	8 1/2%	(8 1/2%)
Yield	6.80%	(6.79%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Libor 3m	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)
STERLING		
New York	1.5073*	(1.5079)
London	1.5062	(1.5078)
DM	2.2768	(2.2765)
FF	1.2286*	(1.2272)
Sfr	1.8550	(1.8550)
Yen	163.12	(163.40)
£ Index	83.8	(83.6)
DOLLAR		
London	1.5108*	(1.5135)
DM	5.1280*	(5.1335)
Sfr	1.2286*	(1.2272)
Yen	108.25*	(108.59)
\$ Index	96.8	(96.9)
Tokyo close Yen 108.45		
NORTH SEA OIL		
Brut 15-day (Jul)	\$18.20	(vbl)
GOLD		
London close	\$392.95	(\$392.65)
* denotes midday trading price		

## Tesco to create 4,000 more jobs with 24 new stores

By SARAH BAGNALL

TESCO, Britain's biggest supermarket group, is to create 4,000 new jobs by opening 24 new stores this year. The jobs are in addition to the 4,500 new jobs announced last month as part of the food retailer's drive to improve customer service.

The new store opening programme, which comprises eight superstores, 12 compact stores and four Metro stores, comes after the opening of 23 new stores last year.

The news came as the food retailer surprised the City with the announcement that it intended to pay a less generous dividend to shareholders in the future. The group said it had decided to rein in the growth in dividend payments because it was spending more than it had predicted two years ago. As a result, the food retailer wants to conserve cash.

Sir Ian MacLaurin, chairman, said: "In the light of the investment opportunities available, we believe it is appropriate in future years to pay progressive dividends, but at a rate of growth which is closer to that of earnings."

In January 1994, Tesco announced its intention to pay progressive dividends, well ahead of earnings because of tougher planning restrictions and depressed trading during the recession.

As a result, over the past three years, Tesco has increased the dividend by about 10.6 per cent a year, compared with the growth in earnings of 6.2 per cent.

However, last year the group spent £649 million, of which nearly £600 million was core UK expenditure and was higher than the group had pencilled in three years ago. Tesco now expects to spend more than £700 million in the current year, of which nearly £100 million will be in Europe, up from £42 million last time.

The news came as Tesco revealed a 14.5 per cent jump in underlying pre-tax profits to £681 million in the year to February 24 and a further

increase in its share of the food retail market. Including a £6 million net loss on the sale of fixed assets and the £39 million cost of integrating Wm Low in the previous year's figures, pre-tax profits rose 22.5 per cent to £675 million.

Sales including value-added tax rose 19.8 per cent to top £13 billion, helped by a 19.8 per cent rise in UK sales to £12.4 billion. Like-for-like sales rose 8.9 per cent. The group managed to lift its market share from 12 per cent in December 1994 to 13.6 per cent in December 1995.

The current year has started well with like-for-like sales growth of 7 per cent in the first five weeks of the year, far outstripping City expectations. The company said part of the growth reflected the continued success of Clubcard, its loyalty card which has more than eight million users. Analysts had expected a slowdown in like-for-like sales after

Tempus 28

Clubcard had passed the anniversary of its launch in mid-February.

Sir Ian said: "Clubcard continues to be a tremendous success. It has helped to attract new customers and has increased the spend of existing customers."

During the year, customers received 662 million of Clubcard vouchers. In its first year Clubcard performed better than expected by making a small profit contribution.

The food retailer reiterated that it expected the petrol price war to cost it £30 million in lost profit. However, the bulk of this was already factored in to City analysts' forecasts.

The final dividend was lifted from 5.9p to 6.55p, making a total for the year of 9.6p, compared with 8.6p last time. The dividend, due to be paid on July 1, is payable out of earnings of 21.9p a share, up 9 per cent. The shares fell 3p to 287p yesterday.



Sir Ian MacLaurin continues to bring in the customers with the store's Clubcard

## National Power shares soar on talk of US bid

By MELVYN MARCUS AND CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

THE share price of National Power, Britain's largest generating company, rose sharply yesterday as takeover rumours linked to Southern, the US utility combine, swept through the stock market.

In response to persistent demand, market-makers raised National Power's share price 3 1/2p to 52 1/2p. By the close of trading almost 13 million shares had changed hands.

Speculation had it that Southern, possibly in conjunction with an American consortium, had raised up to \$12 billion to mount a full scale bid for National Power, valuing the shares at more than 700p each and the whole company at around £8 billion.

National Power and the rival PowerGen are waiting on clearance from Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, for their respective bids for Southern Electricity of the UK and Midlands Electricity. Confirmation that the MMC has given a qualified go-ahead for the bids was leaked to *The Economist* last week.

Southern acquired South Western Electricity for some £1.1 billion during last year's round of consolidation within the electricity sector. Clearance of the power generators' £4.7 billion worth of bids for the Recs is widely expected to

signal further consolidation. A bid for either of the generators cannot proceed without government approval because no investor is allowed to hold more than 15 per cent of National Power or PowerGen. Some analysts believe it would be political folly for the Government to sanction an offer for the generators, which dominate the wholesale market.

Activity in National Power shares helped the FT-SE index to rise 34.8 to a record close of 3,825.3.

Shares in South West Water also moved strongly on belief that Southern of the US is about to move on the company. Market speculation of a US move has been bolstered by comments from Bill Dahlberg, president of the Atlanta-based Southern, that the US group saw a quick opportunity to buy a water company outside the US. South West Water added 13p to close at 729p.

Meanwhile Unison, the broad-based union representing a large proportion of water workers, said that job losses could follow a US takeover of the southern water company, which already faces hostile bid approaches from Wessex Water and Severn Trent.

Pennington, page 27

## Asda renews fight over drug prices

By SARAH BAGNALL

ASDA, the supermarket group, is to renew its assault on the UK's last remaining legal price-fixing agreement, the right of drug manufacturers to set prices on non-prescription medicines.

The market for over-the-counter medicines is worth £1.3 billion a year.

Asda, which played a key role in the demise of the net book agreement with heavy discounting, is taking its fight to destroy the 25-year price-fixing agreement for OTC products to the European Commission. It is to attempt to have the so-called resale price maintenance (RPM) agreement declared unlawful.

Nick Cooper, Asda's corporate counsel, said: "This is another unneeded piece of junk law which limits competition and protects the profit margins of the establishment."

Last year we destroyed the Net Book Agreement and as a result, ordinary working people are reading more books than ever. Now RPM

on medicines and vitamins must go."

Last October Asda defied the RPM agreement by cutting up to 20 per cent off the prices of a range of branded range of vitamins, minerals and dietary supplements. The company was forced swiftly to reinstate the prices when the manufacturers sought injunctions.

Asda is in the process of launching an expanded range of own-label medicines, which fall outside the ambit of the price-fixing agreement.

The Office of Fair Trading has yet to make public the findings of an inquiry into the pricing of OTC products, launched after Asda's move to cut prices.

City analysts argue that the abolition of RPM would reduce prices of medicines and reduce the profits of retailers such as Boots and manufacturers like SmithKline Beecham as well as force many small independent pharmacists out of business.

In the stock market Asda's shares rose 1 1/2p to 109 1/2p.

## Gas service chief to retire early

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

THE MAN at the helm of British Gas's much-maligned service division is to leave the company.

David Wells, 55, is to take early retirement from the company he joined in 1969. Mr Wells, who has headed the service division since its formation three years ago, will leave in late summer after briefing his successor. He has no plans for other work, British Gas said.

The company said Mr Wells had indicated a wish to retire early several months ago and that he would leave British Gas having "successfully established service as a separate business."

His role came under intense scrutiny last winter when complaints about the company's loss-making service division soared.

Mr Wells will be replaced as managing director of service by Roger Wood who moves from MIRA Marconi Space UK, where he was managing director. Pennington, page 27

## OFC directors accused by DTI

By ROBERT MILLER AND KAREN ZAGOR

DIRECTORS of the troubled Ostrich Farming Corporation (OFC) siphoned off investors' money through disadvantageous contracts with suppliers, the Department of Trade and Industry has alleged.

OFC, which has ceased trading following the presentation of a winding-up petition by the DTI, attracted millions of pounds from thousands of UK investors.

The money was used to buy ostriches that are currently at seven sites in Belgium under the care of Eddy Nachtergaele, an ostrich farmer.

In documents filed in the High Court, the DTI said that initially OFC had purchased ostriches direct from Mr Nachtergaele's Zooparc Amosafari company. More recently, OFC bought the birds from Wall Street LLC and Wallstreet Corporation (UK) Ltd, which in turn acquired the ostriches from Zooparc.

The DTI petition says: "The prices paid to the Wallstreet companies greatly exceed those charged by Zooparc." The DTI continues: "There

appears to be no good reason for involving the Wallstreet companies in the purchase of ostriches thus permitting Wallstreet to make an undeserved profit at the company's (OFC) expense to extract substantial profits from the company and at the company's expense, for no discernible benefit."

The DTI further alleges that OFC entered into uncommercial contracts with a number of "other companies" that were not in the interests of OFC as a company and that were intended to financially benefit the recorded directors of the "other companies". The petition adds: "Money is siphoned off from the company (OFC) by this method."

One of the two directors named is Brian Ketchell, who is the subject of an application by the DTI for disqualification as a company director in connection with his conduct as a director of Full Force Ltd. OFC, the DTI says, "is partly under the control of a person who is alleged not to be fit to be a director of a company."

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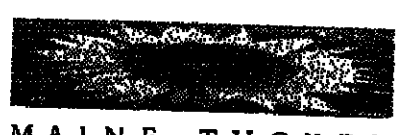
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# PFI comes under fire over value for money

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Government's show-case Private Finance Initiative (PFI), designed to switch responsibility for public infrastructure projects to the private sector, has been roundly criticised by a Conservative-controlled committee of backbench MPs.

While welcoming the thrust of the PFI, the committee said better evaluation and monitoring was needed to ensure that taxpayers were getting value for money. In their first report into the initiative, the cross-party committee of MPs also highlighted a series of concerns about delays and other difficulties arising from the initiative.

In particular, the MPs called upon the Treasury to "demonstrate with reference to particular examples and total figures, that higher financing costs have been more than offset by efficiency gains".

They questioned "whether it remains appropriate that private finance options must

always be explored", and called for "a clear statement of the future revenue commitments implicit in PFI projects".

The conclusions, drawn after a two-month inquiry, reveal that the Government has failed to demonstrate the satisfaction of its own backbenchers that the PFI is delivering value for money.

Members of the committee were also concerned about the delays caused by the Government's insistence that every public spending project, however small, was first offered to the private sector.

"It would be unacceptable if the Government's planning for the future provision of roads or hospitals began to be driven by the shorter-term perspectives of private bidders," said the committee.

It added that the PFI, by reducing capital spending, should enhance control of overall public spending — but there was a danger that it might do the opposite.

Private companies committed to invest £4.8 billion in building and operating projects ranging from roads to prisons last year. The Government is aiming to achieve commitments totalling £14 billion by 1998-99.

Andrew Smith, the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said the report confirmed Labour's concern that the PFI was being "mis-handled" by the Government. In particular, he said, the Government had failed to set strategic priorities "to aid private bidders for projects, or streamline the bidding process so that projects could get off the ground more quickly."

Mr Smith also complained about a lack of accountability for public contributions to private finance initiatives, and the lack of guidelines to ensure that the projects offered to the private sector were appropriate.



Right note: Richard Holland, chief executive of Boosey & Hawkes, the music publisher and instrument maker, said 1995 pre-tax profits rose £1.6 million to £5.1 million. The total dividend is 7p (5.9p), with a final 5.47p City diary, page 29

## CBI gives warning on job insecurity

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

JOB insecurity can undermine Britain's economic prosperity, Adair Turner, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, said last night.

His statement on the eve of publication of the latest unemployment figures today will be seized on by Labour leaders as recognition of the importance they have been attaching to attacking rising job insecurity.

Addressing business leaders in Leeds, Mr Turner referred to the claim by Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, that job insecurity was a "state of mind", saying that while insecurity might be a matter of perception, in business perceptions mattered.

He said: "Unless addressed, that feeling of insecurity can undermine the consumer confidence and public acceptance of the flexibility so vital to the UK's future prosperity."

Mr Turner, who drew accusations of being too close to Labour when he said recently that higher growth would and should lead to higher wages, added that education and training to ensure people's continuing employability would be vital for the return of the economic "feel-good" factor.

While Britain spent a higher proportion of output on education than Germany or Japan, it did not seem to be getting a better result for it. He questioned "whether some of our problems are not the product of mistaken educational policies pursued over many years".

Ministers hope that the latest unemployment figures will show a fall in the number out of work and claiming benefits after last month's surprise 6,800 increase. But Labour will claim that the number of people forced into part-time or temporary work has risen by more than a third since the last general election.

Michael Meacher, Labour's employment spokesman, will claim that more than 1.4 million people are "under-employed", working part-time, or on temporary contracts because of a lack of full-time jobs.

## Defiant Midshires besieged

By ANNE ASHWORTH

SPECULATORS continue to crowd the branches of Birmingham Midshires Building Society despite its decision to raise the minimum opening balances on its savings accounts.

At some branches, demand has even increased as investors clamour to become members, so qualifying for a bonus if the society abandons its much-vaunted attachment to mutuality. One financial ad-

viser requested 400 applications forms. Anyone aspiring to become a Birmingham Midshires member at 17 city centre branches now needs £1,500. At other branches, the minimum is £500.

Bid rumours have gained strength after the announcement that the Bristol & West is to be taken over by the Bank of Ireland. However, a spokesman said that the society was not, and never had been, in

merger or takeover talks. The minimum level had been changed to maintain standards of service.

□ The Chelsea Building Society has closed four accounts, having seen new accounts grow tenfold. It has withdrawn three share accounts which carry voting rights and so are entitled to participate in any merger bonus.

Pennington, page 27

At the crossroads? page 29

## Second director to quit First Choice

FIRST CHOICE HOLIDAYS, the UK's third-largest tour operator, is to lose its second board member in six months. Peter Phillipson, managing director of the UK tour operating division, confirmed yesterday that he had given six months' notice. He is rumoured to have fallen out with Francis Baron, chief executive, over the commercial direction of the company. No replacement has yet been found, although the company says it is looking to appoint an outsider.

Mr Phillipson's decision to quit comes within months of the resignation of Malcolm Heald, First Choice's respected finance director, who is also believed to have left the company because of a personality clash. Mr Heald joined Hepworth and was replaced by David Gill, former finance director of Proudfoot.

## Threat to bank jobs

UP TO 30,000 banking jobs could be lost if the Treasury approves plans to end the physical exchanging of cheques between banks, according to Bifu, the banking union. The plans propose that cheques no longer go physically through the clearing system. Instead, computers would deal with them electronically. Ed Sweeney, general secretary of Bifu, said: "Staff displaced should be switched to help customers at hard-pressed counters and to raise staffing levels elsewhere."

## Construction orders fall

NEW construction orders fell for the second month running in February, according to the Department of the Environment. However, taking the three months to February together, orders were 9 per cent up on the previous three and 11 per cent up on the same period a year ago. Comparable figures for private housing were 5 per cent and 18 per cent up; public housing and housing associations, 6 per cent up but 10 per cent down; and in infrastructure, 6 per cent lower but 10 per cent up.

## Peptide in Mochida link

PEPTIDE THERAPEUTICS, the biopharmaceuticals company that floated in November, said yesterday that there is a good chance it will strike a licensing agreement with Mochida Pharmaceutical of Japan by the end of the year. The agreement would allow Mochida to test and eventually sell Peptide products in exchange for royalty payments. Peptide reported an operating loss of £3.8 million in the year to December 31 after additional investment in research and development.

## Gradus advances

GRADUS GROUP, manufacturer of flooring accessories and lighting systems, made pre-tax profits of £3.6 million last year, a rise of 15.3 per cent. The result was achieved despite a lack of improvement in trading conditions. Earnings were 13.48p a share, up 11.9 per cent. The company, which secured a stock market listing last year, is paying a final dividend of 3.6p a share for a maiden total of 4.6p. The shares were unchanged at 126p, against a placing price of 122p.

## APH plans expansion

AUTOMOTIVE Precision Holdings, the manufacturer of high precision components for the automotive industry, proposes to expand manufacturing capacity at its site in Tonbridge, Kent, to cater for expected growth in demand. Yesterday the company reported a rise in pre-tax profits to £6.1 million 1995, compared with £5.6 million. Earnings were 10.1p a share, rising from 9.1p. The total dividend is increased to 5p a share from 3p, with a final 3.3p due on May 31.

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This week *The Times*, in association with Exodus Travels, launches an exciting competition: the chance to win an adventure holiday for two every year for life. There are 200 adrenalin-pumping holidays in 65 countries to choose from and every day we will feature details of one exhilarating type of adventure.

Today we look at trekking in the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal, one of the most beautiful countries in the world. It contains an incredible variety of scenery, including huge glaciers, alpine pastures, dense, unspoiled forests and terraced hillsides.

Most of these treks are not for climbers, they are for serious walkers with a spirit of adventure. On the Everest Panorama holiday, above which is a grade 'B' trek, you fly from London to Kathmandu and then on to Lukla, a strip. You stay in village inns and mountain lodges run by Sherpas renowned for their hospitality.

of the Khumbu valley and headquarters of Sagarmatha National Park, the trek goes to what is arguably the finest mountain viewpoint in the world: Thangboche, the famous Buddhist monastery.

**TREKKING PROFILE:** 17 days, nine walking, altitude maximum 4,260m, five nights hotels, nine nights lodges.

**DEPARTURES:** Oct 2, 9, 16 and 30, Nov 20, Dec 11 and 18.

**PRICE:** £1,195-£1,275 plus insurance, £52.

Ask for Dossier TNV.

Some treks are grade E, such as the Mera Peak Expedition, which goes to a maximum of 6,476m and for which you would need some previous ice-axe and crampon experience. Your reward would be reaching the summit of a Himalayan peak with views that encompass four of the five highest mountains on earth.

But there are trekking holidays, such as Nepal Discoverer, which is grade A and one which anyone who is reasonably fit would enjoy.

You fly to Kathmandu then drive to Pokhara via Gorkha. You can go rafting on the way to Chitwan National Park and a safari into the jungle.

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\*Send for a grading guide to help you decide which type of trek you are physically capable of from: Exodus Travels, 9 Weir Rd, London SW12 0LT.

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vouchers — giving you a possible saving on your holiday of £250.

You can claim from £150 to £250 off the cost of any of the Himalayan trekking holidays mentioned above with your *Times* vouchers on holidays booked before Dec 31, 1996. Full terms and conditions were published in Monday's paper.

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### LEGAL NOTICES

The Insolvency Act 1986  
High Court of Justice  
No 00696 of 1996  
NEM HEALTH COLLECTY LIMITED  
(In Administration)

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of creditors in the above matter is to be held at The High Court, 100 Temple Street, London EC2R 6BP, on the 23rd day of May 1996 at 11.00 am to consider the proposals under section 22(1) of the Insolvency Act 1986 and to consider establishing a creditors' committee. Members requesting a copy of the statement of proposals should do so in writing to: The High Court, 100 Temple Street, London EC2R 6BP, for the attention of D J Morris Esq.

A proxy form should be completed and returned to me (D J Morris) at the above address by the date of the meeting if you cannot attend the meeting and wish to be represented. In order to be entitled to vote at the meeting you must give to me, not later than 12.00 noon on the business day before the day fixed for the meeting, details in writing of your claim. P E TUCK, Joint Administrator

The Insolvency Act 1986  
High Court of Justice  
No 00697 of 1996  
COAL INVESTMENTS PLC  
(In Administration)

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The Insolvency Act 1986  
High Court of Justice  
No 00698 of 1996  
MAREKHA MAIN LIMITED  
(In Administration)

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The Insolvency Act 1986  
High Court of Justice  
No 00699 of 1996  
SEVERAL COOLLY LIMITED  
(In Administration)

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The Insolvency Act 1986  
High Court of Justice  
No 00700 of 1996  
MAREKHA MAIN LIMITED  
(In Administration)

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The Insolvency Act 1986  
High Court of Justice  
No 00701 of 1996  
SEVERAL COOLLY LIMITED  
(In Administration)

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## AMP SOCIETY

### NOTICE OF MEETING

Australian Mutual Provident Society (Incorporated in the United Kingdom)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of the members of the Australian Mutual Provident Society (AMP) will be held at the Merchant Taylors' Hall, 20 Threadneedle Street, London EC2R 8AY at 11.00 am on Monday, 20 May 1996.

- To discuss the report on AMP's United Kingdom operations for the year ended 31 December 1995.
- To discuss the report on AMP's United Kingdom operations for the year ended 31 December 1995.
- To elect or re-elect members of the AMP's United Kingdom Board of Directors for the year ended 31 December 1996.
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By order of the United Kingdom Board of AMP and London Life.  
S P A Kibson  
Secretary  
21 March 1996  
London Life  
Head Office:  
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□ DTI's plans for disorderly meetings □ Cost of British Gas service disaster □ South West bidders deserve equal measures

## Troublemakers have rights too

THE average shareholders' meeting is a dreary affair. Those for the larger companies attract hordes of trippers up from the shires, keen to follow up with a trip to the Army & Navy but each with one nit-picking query to justify the train fare.

Smaller companies can only hope to attract a couple of bored fund managers, co-opted by virtue of their relatively low place in the institution's pecking order. Thank heaven they are usually over in seconds.

But every now and then along comes a meeting so exceptional, such fun, that those present count themselves privileged to be there. Who could forget the Midland Bank tank? Or Cedric the pig at British Gas? (By the by, cruel rumour had Cedric married up with sage and onion stuffing a few months ago: untrue, Cedric, in fact a Cedricina as it turns out, is both alive and, indeed, in pig.)

There was the man who arrived at Burton's dressed as a banana, for reasons best left unexplained, during the marital turmoil of Sir Ralph Halpern some years ago. More seriously, the likes of ICI, British Aerospace, Hanson and any number of banks have been targeted by zealous bands of protesters who have used the companies' annual window on the world as a means of highlighting their grievances.

They are a nuisance — unless you happen to share their views. But they are an inevitable nuisance, because company law requires directors to share the same space once a year as the people who elect them and who own the company, the shareholders. Tamper with that, and you might as well throw away the corporate governance handbook.

A number of executives would rather like to. Meanwhile the City thinks they are a waste of time. Paul Myers at Gartmore, who chaired a City/industry working group on the matter, would like to make meetings more useful for the big institutions, which must among other things mean curbing or jettisoning the special interest groups.

The Department of Trade and Industry is now considering whether to require companies to bear the heavy cost of circulating resolutions from such ginger groups ahead of the meeting. This currently falls on those investors, and the DTI has put out a consultative document inviting informed comment.

This must amount to a strengthening of the position of

special interest groups. So at the same time, the DTI accepts that something must be done to discourage the "troublemakers" and separate them from those with a genuine case, and is looking at ways to minimise trouble at the actual meetings.

But you can't have it both ways. You can't filter out one set of shareholders and allow through another, as part of a bargain to award all investors more clout. Trouble-makers with shares are shareholders. The laws on public disorder are the only curb on their behaviour. If you don't like that, take the company private.

### Pressure in the pipeline at Gas

SPEAKING to this paper in February, David Wells suggested that either he and the much-disputed British Gas service business would get its act together in time for next winter or the whole company would go down the tubes.

It seemed fair at the time, but yesterday his employer unveiled



PENNINGTON

a third option. Mr Wells, 55, is taking early retirement, to be replaced by young, thrusting Roger Wood, who is, er, 53.

Mr Wells' departure is not as brutal as it might seem, but one of those staggered departures that suggest a degree of truth in the well-worn phrase "an amicable parting". He is at least staying around for a few months to ease the changeover. But British Gas has clearly decided that the problems at the service side, which climaxed in public vilification when thousands of people found that their prompt service guarantees were almost worthless, cannot be resolved by the existing management.

Their resolution will come by the first cold spell of next winter,

or else. The damage this year is done, and it will be quantified by how many thousands of customers refuse to renew their annual service contracts, which by the nature of things tend to fall due in the autumn. Too few customers and the business, which after last year's disasters will have to gear up to meet close to the maximum workload that can be forecast on the existing customer base, will be wildly unprofitable. For investors, this is all irrelevant because service is being lumped into that half of the British Gas demerger, which may even be worthless anyway — the bit that contains supply and those accused "take-or-pay" contracts that could bring the company down if not renegotiated with the North Sea suppliers.

This half, which deals directly with the public and will probably retain the British Gas name, is dubbed DuffCo by outsiders, and British Gas chairman Richard Giordano says he would be keen to ease his Aunt Maud out of it. It will therefore be given away free with the profitable part on demerger. If those con-

tracts are not renegotiated to take at least some of the pain away, a few bust boilers next winter will be the least of its problems.

### Down by the water's edge

PROD any executive hard enough and you will get a tirade about how the mandarins of Whitehall and the competition watchdogs have it in for British industry, and will always favour foreign firms. Sometimes, especially after the second brandy, the criticism widens to take in the Government as well.

At times they have a point. The arcane rules governing takeovers in the water industry say that if a fellow supplier bids, that is, one with proven ability on home turf of supplying the stuff, that bid must be picked apart by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. If the Waterworks Company of the grey and greasy Limpopo bids, it could go through on the nod.

This is because the first raises matters of competition, the last does not. This, potentially, is the

situation at South West Water, where two English bidders are about to be shuffled off to the Commission for three months — why does it take three months? Does someone at the MMC actually enjoy the process?

Yet the US firm Southern, a possible bidder it is thought, could go through unscathed, tying the deal up while the other two are decimated at the MMC. There is a public interest provision that could prompt a reference, and indications are that Ian Byatt, the water regulator, is keen for one. He is right to be. If Southern bids, it should be referred to allow all possible buyers of South West to compete equally. Both shareholders and customers would benefit.

### Traveller's check

THE Birmingham Midshires has tried to kill rumours that investors could be heading for a windfall but still they queue around the block to open new accounts. Nobody believes anything building societies say any more. The solution adopted borders on the surreal. The size of deposit has been raised — fair enough. But in 17 branches identified as most attractive to carpet-baggers it has been jacked up even higher. Will anyone with the £500 now needed balk at the bus fare to the cheaper branch?

## Braas roofing merger brings Redland £220m

By PAUL DURMAN

REDLAND, the building materials company, will receive £220 million for merging its wholly owned roof tile businesses with those of Braas, its German subsidiary.

The deal will create Redland Braas Building Group which, with annual sales of £1.3 billion, will be the world's leading roofing company. Redland will have a 56.5 per cent stake in RBB, up from the 50.76 per cent shareholding it currently owns in Braas.

Robert Napier, Redland's chief executive, said uniting the business under a single management team will enable RBB to produce significantly better results. Decisions on the location of new factories will no longer be complicated by the different interests of the

British and German shareholders.

Braas is hugely powerful in the German building industry, with a 46 per cent share of the German roofing market. It makes more than 5,000 different tiles and other roofing accessories.

Last year Braas made pre-tax profits of £225.7 million on sales of £1 billion, making it much more profitable than Redland's tiling companies, which produced £38.5 million of profits from sales of £289 million. Three-quarters of RBB's pre-tax profits come from Germany.

The Redland businesses joining RBB include Redland Roof Tiles in the UK and Redland Dakprodukten in the Netherlands. The Northern

Ireland business is currently excluded.

The deal values the Redland businesses at £440 million and Braas at £1.679 billion. It will take effect on January 1, with the Redland companies structured to have no net cash.

Mr Napier will be chairman of RBB while the chief executive will be Erich Gerlach, chief executive of Braas. Herr Gerlach and Helly Bruhn-Braas, chairman of the Braas Family Trust, will join the board of Redland.

Asked about the possibility of a more far-reaching merger between Redland and Braas, Mr Napier said the Braas family and other minority shareholders in the German company had no wish to take an interest in Redland's aggre-

gates business. The deal, negotiated over the last two months, will improve the cashflow Redland receives from its roofing interests. Provided RBB's borrowings remain below DM600 million, Redland will be able to take an £82 million dividend. This is an increase from its current entitlement to £54 million, although Braas had already allowed Redland to receive £75 million in 1995 and 1996.

Redland is still working on the sale of its brickmaking business. An announcement is expected in the next two weeks, with CINven, the venture capital group, and Wienerberger of Austria regarded as the favoured purchasers.

Tempus, page 28

### BICC chief gets bonus package

SHAREHOLDERS in BICC, the cable and construction group, yesterday voted through proposals to give Alan Jones, the new chief executive, a cash and shares bonus worth up to 75 per cent of his basic salary over three years. He earns the equivalent of £400,000 a year.

Other directors and senior managers will also be eligible for bonus awards up to a maximum of 50 per cent of their average pay based on the final two years of the three year qualifying period.

The three-year incentive plan will be based on the company's dividend and share performance from January 1, 1996, compared with that of FT-SE 100 companies and with a group of eight companies similar to BICC.

## Hanson sells battery group

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

HANSON yesterday continued its self-off programme ahead of the four-way split of the company with its sale of Eveready South Africa to Duracell.

Sale of the South African battery business follows Hanson's disposal in 1992 of Eveready UK to Ralston Purina of the US. Yesterday's sale means that Hanson has made a substantial profit on the battery company it bought in 1981 for £95 million. Duracell paid £84 million for Eveready SA while Ralston Purina bought the UK arm for £132 million. Eveready SA in the year to September 30 made sales of £64 million.

Hanson will retain Crabtree, a manufacturer of electrical equipment that formed part of the Eveready package.

Derek Bonham, chief executive of Hanson, said: "This sale marks further progress in our

### CU expects increase in life business

COMMERCIAL Union expects life business to rise this year although pressure on general insurance premiums in the UK will mean first-quarter profits will be "so-so", John Carter, chief executive, said yesterday (Marianne Curphey writes).

Mr Carter said that profits would also be affected by bad weather in the US, which cost the company £12 million in January. CU shares slipped 1p to 567p.

The company reported record pre-tax profits of £509 million in February, in spite of paying out £33 million in the UK for cold weather damage.

Mr Carter said after the annual meeting yesterday that first-quarter figures, due on May 15, would show an increase in profits from investments.

## Tie Rack aims to expand

By SARAH BAGNALL

TIE RACK, the high street and airport retailer of neckwear and fashion accessories, plans to expand its store base by more than 10 per cent in the current year by opening up to 50 new outlets.

Most of the new stores will be overseas. The retailer opened 50 stores last year, taking the total to 379 in 26 countries. As a result, the number of Tie Rack stores overseas exceeded those in the UK for the first time.

Nigel McGinley, chief executive, said: "We have already opened ten new stores this year and expect to open another 30 to 40. Of these about 90 per cent will be overseas, principally in continental Europe."

Tie Rack, whose chairman is Roy Bishko, announced a 7 per cent advance in pre-tax profits from £7.4 million to £7.9 million in the year to January 28. The rise was held in check by the costs involved in setting up in new markets and investment in the group's warehouse in Chiswick. Group sales rose 15 per cent to £96.6 million, while like-for-like sales were flat.

A fall in UK profits was more than offset by improved results from all the group's other geographic regions.

The final dividend was held at 2.25p, making a total for the year of 2.75p, up from 2.25p last time. The dividend, due on July 30, is being paid out of earnings of 9.87p a share, up from 9.34p last time.

Tempus, page 28  
City Diary, page 29



Roy Bishko, left, and Nigel McGinley saw profits rise

## No clues to Reuters cash plans

Reuters, the financial information and electronic trading group, disappointed the City yesterday when it failed to disclose its preferred method of distributing excess cash to shareholders. The shares slipped 2p to 749p.

The company said only that it "expects to resolve this issue by the end of the year". Options include a share buyback, similar to the £350 million buyback in 1993, or a special dividend. Reuters had £850 million in cash at the end of its last financial year. It has not put a figure on how much it intends to return to shareholders.

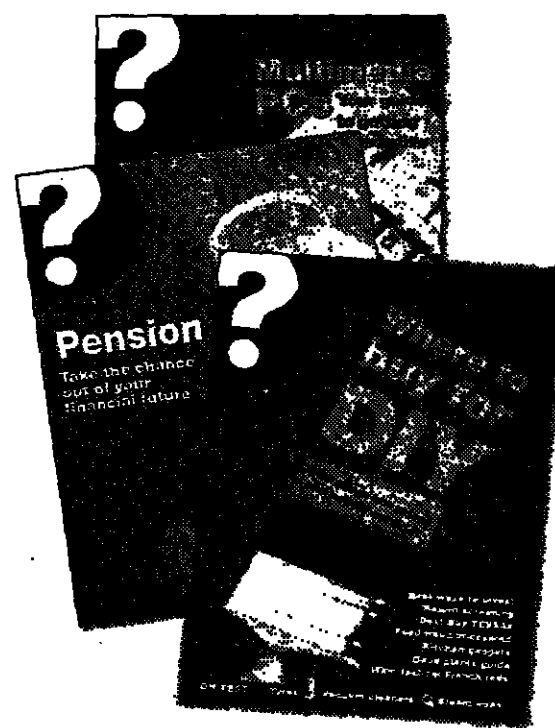
### DTI action

The Department of Trade and Industry yesterday has obtained an interim injunction against *The Economist* magazine, stopping publication of further details of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the proposed takeover of two regional electricity companies by National Power and PowerGen.

### Morris ahead

The legal obstacles facing the US tobacco industry had little effect on Philip Morris, the world's largest cigarette company, during the first quarter of this year. Despite litigation from anti-smoking activists, sales rose to an all-time high and net earnings increased by 14.8 per cent.

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**WHICH?**  
THE INDEPENDENT CONSUMER GUIDE

## Cobham on the acquisition trail

By PAUL DURMAN

COBHAM, the aero engineering business, is ready to spend £100 million to 150 million on an acquisition.

Giles Irwin, Cobham's financial director, said the company had £76 million of its £120 million of shareholders' funds in cash, and had recently raised \$50 million through a loan note issue in America. The board was prepared to see group borrowings rise to 70 per cent of net assets, from 13.6 per cent at the end of 1995.

Gordon Page, chief executive, said: "There are some fundamental changes taking place in the aerospace business, and we want to be able to take advantage of them. We know what we want to buy. It's a question of whether we could buy it."

Cobham, best known for in-flight refuelling equipment, was reporting pre-tax profits for 1995 of £29.8 million - a 31 per cent improvement, although the comparison is flat-

tered by £3 million of exceptional costs in 1994.

Cobham said profits of £8.1 million from Westwind Air Bearings, the £75 million purchase made just before Christmas, exceeded expectations.

Westwind was a move outside aerospace. It makes high technology air-bearing spindles used in the precision drilling of printed circuit boards and semiconductor manufacture. It is also involved in the planned launch

of a high-speed colour laser printer.

Cobham's manufacturing arm, which includes the Flight Refuelling division, increased profits from £15.5 million to £21.7 million. FR Aviation, which provides electronic warfare training and other services to the Royal Navy, increased its profits from £7.3 million to £8.1 million.

The group is paying a 6.6p final dividend, increasing the total 16 per cent to 9.65p.















# DirecTV plans to launch satellite service in Europe

By ERIC REGULY

DIRECTV, the satellite television service ultimately owned by General Motors, plans to launch a digital satellite operation in competition with BSKyB and other media companies in Europe.

DirecTV is looking for European partners and has been trying to find a chief executive to run the European division. Several potential candidates in Britain, including cable company executives, have been interviewed.

Celso Azevedo, the senior vice-president of DirecTV International, the newly formed overseas division of DirecTV, said: "Europe is very important to us. We have been in contact with some potential partners in several countries."

He would not identify the partnership candidates, but said an announcement about the formation of the European service probably would be made within a few months.

DirecTV, based in Los An-

geles, is the fastest-growing digital TV company in the world. BSKyB, 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, uses analogue technology but plans to launch a digital service in a year or so.

DirecTV was launched by Hughes Electronics, the satellite communications and aerospace subsidiary of General Motors, and has about 1.4 million US subscribers. It expects to have three million by the end of the year, with forecasts of ten million by 2000.

AT&T, America's largest long-distance phone company, bought a 2.5 per cent stake in January for \$137.5 million, valuing the company at \$5.5 billion. AT&T has an option to increase its stake to 30 per cent over 5 years, depending on its ability to recruit DirecTV customers.

Subscribers are attracted to the service mainly because of choice. DirecTV offers about

175 digital video and audio channels and, like BSKyB, offers movies, sport, children's shows and pay-per-view.

DirecTV has said it wants to become the "Coca-Cola of digital TV" around the world. With three local partners, it recently launched a South American service called Galaxy Latin America that will compete against a consortium that includes The News Corporation and Tele-Communications Inc, the world's largest cable company. It also has formed a partnership in Japan which is scheduled to begin broadcasting in mid-1997.

Mr Azevedo said that DirecTV's ideal European partners would provide programming and marketing expertise. The company, he said, will try to lease space on the Astra or Eutelsat satellites. Failing that, it might lease a satellite from Hughes, its owner.



Alan Jerome plans to build a multi-based business so that the textile firm can ride out future storms

## Jerome dresses tartan army

By FRASER NELSON

CREASE-FREE trousers and Braveheart tartan waistcoats are among the designs that have sustained the return to profitability at S Jerome & Sons, the textile group that yesterday reported a 31 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £951,000 in 1995. The West Yorkshire company

has capitalised on overseas demand for tartan, increasing exports by 30 per cent to account for 27 per cent of its turnover.

Jerome's growth is stabilising from last year's profits recovery of 75 per cent. It has doubled the capacity of its weaving machines in Shipley and bought West Yorkshire Weavers, which contributed £100,000 in the first six months. Alan

Jerome, the chairman, said the group was aiming for security, not market dominance. "In the textile business, sales are cyclical — you can't rely on the popularity of any one product. Our strategy is to build a multi-based business so in future, we can ride the storms."

Earnings were up 1.2p to 7.7p. The dividend rises to 2.25p (1.5p), with a final 1.5p.

## Sidlaw to close factory

Sidlaw Group, the oil services and packaging company, is to close a factory at Washington, Tyne and Wear, with the loss of about 90 jobs. The factory, which supplies packaging for the food sector, incurred losses of more than £1 million in the six months to March 31. Closure costs were estimated at £2.2 million.

### EBRD pact

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development yesterday ended its two-day annual meeting in Sofia which was highlighted by agreement to double its capital. Jacques de Larosière, president, said the increase was "crucial".

### Car sales up

Car sales in western Europe rose by 3.1 per cent in March, compared with March 1995, according to provisional figures from the European association of manufacturers. Car sales totalled 1.275 million last month, compared with 1.238 a year earlier.

### Whisky cheer

Exports of Scotch whisky rose 4 per cent to £2.276 billion in 1995 from £2.191 billion in the previous year. European Union exports, which account for almost 40 per cent of total exports, rose 2 per cent to £872 million.

## BAe deal opens up Asia Pacific

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

BRITISH Aerospace yesterday became one of Australia's largest defence companies with the acquisition of AWA Defence Industries for A\$54 million (£28 million).

The purchase, which brings BAE a range of defence products including military vehicles, infra-red radar and the Nulka hovering rocket, forms a key plank in the company's strategy to expand in the Asia Pacific region.

AWA Defence Industries is expected to achieve sales of A\$150 million in 1996 and has about A\$300 million of orders.

After the acquisition, BAE Australia will have annual turnover of A\$260 million and employ 2,000. The deal is expected to pave the way for the company to develop a big export business into Asia.

Dick Evans, BAE's chief executive, said yesterday: "The acquisition is a major strategic progression for British Aerospace Australia in line with its objective to increase significantly its commitment to growth in Australia."

Robin Southwell, chief executive of BAE Australia, said: "It allows us to show our customers and the Australian government that we are investing in and committed to the growth of our business in Australia."

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## MUSIC

**Violinist turned humanitarian:** Lord Menuhin reflects on his new tasks as he approaches 80



## YOUNG ARTS

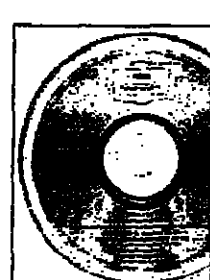
**Children in Southwark prepare the way for the reconstructed Globe with weeks of Elizabethan fun**

## THE TIMES ARTS



## TOMORROW

**Reviews of all the new films, including Bruce Willis in Terry Gilliam's *Twelve Monkeys***



## TOMORROW

**Our unrivalled guide to the best new videos and classical recordings moves to Thursday**

Yehudi Menuhin will be 80 next Monday. Here he talks about his work; and we report on a new documentary portrait

# Plenty of time to change the world

Joanna Pitman finds Menuhin's humanitarian passions undimmed

It is fascinating and impressive, but most of all heartening, to see Lord Menuhin turning 80 in a spirit of expectation that several decades of activity are yet to come. It is the result of an irrepressible mind that is still darting around, fizzing with ideas, schemes and causes which he earnestly believes will make the world a better place. The fact that his mother, just turned 100, is alive and kicking in San Francisco, and still proudly monitoring her son's prodigious achievements, may explain the impression that Menuhin is becoming ever more youthful.

Music remains his core passion, but he has long ago taken his music beyond its traditional parameters in his quest to create a more positive, inspired and courteous world. "I have numerous other projects on the go, schemes to arrange, fundamental changes to be made to society. We live in a crime-producing civilisation. If there are terrorists, it is because we have produced them. If there are drug-crazed children, it is because we have not given them inspiration. So many things can be improved with simple but carefully judged effort. I have a lot to do but I think I am achieving something already."

Even at 80, his face and body are as light, supple and mobile as his mind. As he speaks, the gentle bird-like profile turns and dips, his quick avian eyes darting about in search of new challenges, new solutions.

His achievements so far are impressive indeed. Live Music Now, one of his earliest projects, was founded 22 years

ago to give talented young musicians performing experience before people who would not normally have access to live music: children with special needs, adults with learning difficulties, elderly people, prison inmates.

"LMN organises almost 2,000 concerts a year," he says. "It is gratifying to see that joy can be awakened even for the most withdrawn or depressed among us. The inspiration for the project came from my travels in Germany immediately after the war when I played for audiences in newly liberated camps. In many cases, the music was their first contact with civilisation. I was seeing these people's strengths and weaknesses and for the first time I saw what music could do for them. It was an experience which changed and inspired me."

**The only antidote to crime is to foster hope?**

MUS-E is another project designed to inspire the underprivileged. Founded in 1994, this one focuses on introducing teaching based on music and dancing to primary schools across Europe in order to channel the energies of children with violent or unhappy home environments. "My thesis is that the only antidote to crime is to introduce an atmosphere of hope, health, trust and joy with music. This can be done very simply by performing dancing and singing every day in violent schools. In a short time it is amazing how the hate is transformed."

Not satisfied with LMN and MUS-E (and of course the International Menuhin Academy, the Yehudi Menuhin School, and the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation), the indefatigable Menu-



"Even at 80, Menuhin's face and body are as light, supple and mobile as his mind"

hin last year dreamt up the Mozart Fund. This seeks to change international copyright law so that royalties are paid on works now in the public domain. The revenue would be used for charity projects for the prevention of human, environmental and cultural disasters. "My vision is that the Mozart Fund would include support for the struggle to prevent torture, action to save the Alpine environment, the work of the Red Cross, the fight against leprosy, all sorts of needs."

Talking to Menuhin and encountering his sometimes extraordinary schemes for the betterment of our world, one becomes steadily more aware that the astonishingly autodidactic approach of the man is the result of the erratic education of the boy. By 1927, when Menuhin had turned ten, he had spent less than a day at school.

Orthodox schooling was im-

possible as he was spending most of his life on the road performing in the world's concert halls. His father had given up his job to accompany him and the young Menuhin was earning a living in his place to support the family.

"I have had no academic training at all. Only my own reading, philosophy, thought, and a certain breadth of experience. In a way, my lack of formal education means that I can distance myself from details and take a broader view of problems that face us."

The result is a staggering array of ideas. A "Parliament of Cultures" is one of his latest projects. "This will be a pipeline into Brussels — neither bureaucratic nor political — which will give a voice to each national and regional culture, including nomadic peoples. It will give them a forum in which they can

express their grievances on any issue."

Menuhin has a solution to the Irish problem, involving the meeting of widows from both sides. He has a scheme for a transnational system to provide credits in welfare, health, education and culture for everybody. He supports alternative medicine (the one issue that tempted this life peer to attend a House of Lords debate), he practises yoga (he once stood on his head for the Queen, and did it again after a Berlin Philharmonic centenary concert), he has ideas for combating BSE, he still travels for eight months each year and he lends his name to 400 charities.

Oh, and he has recently been working on a blueprint for changing party political democracies into less combative, more constructive, forces for good. What a place the world would be if we all had centenarian mothers.

## Unique glimpse of a prodigy

A new Menuhin film uses rare archive material, as Michael Binyon reports

Lord Menuhin is a familiar public figure: sage, humanist, philanthropist, conductor, and music's foremost ambassador. But it is for his achievements as a violinist — one of the greatest this century has seen — that Menuhin is still famed. Although he has left a rich legacy of recordings, he no longer performs. The inspired playing that saw him hailed as a child prodigy 70 years ago is now a fading memory.

But Bruno Monsiegeon, a friend, fellow musician and film-maker, was determined to reinforce memory with evidence. Luckily there is plenty around. Primitive cine-cameras were already recording the sensation of the chubby Jewish boy from San Francisco when he took the concert halls of America by storm. Footage of his performance with the great conductors and orchestras of the Twenties and Thirties, of interviews with the soft-spoken boy, of public adulation and newspaper hype, have lain for years in archives.

Years of research have now paid off. Yehudi Menuhin, *The Violin of the Century*, a two-hour film that won acclaim when shown on French television, received its British premiere at the Institut Français last year, and extracts were shown last month to the Queen and guests invited to celebrate Menuhin at Buckingham Palace.

Its triumph lies not only in the fascination of seeing the jerky images of this century's great men — Elgar, Toscanini, Enescu, Busch, Furtwängler — bewitched by the youth who so effortlessly interpreted their vision. It lies also in the poignant juxtaposition of Menuhin, today's elder statesman, and the young Yehudi.

Menuhin himself guides us through an extraordinary, nomadic life that, as he admits, has never known hardship, suffered professional setback or been touched by the cata-



The boy virtuoso on his way to Europe in 1926. This picture is from Menuhin's autobiography *Unfinished Journey*, now published by Methuen in revised form

clysm that befell so many fellow Jews. Monsiegeon's technique avoids the dangers of both obituary or hagiography: Menuhin is still very much there, commenting detachedly on his own performances: "I like my left hand there — it's really jolly good!"

As a raconteur, he reflects all the shading of his playing: sometimes light, almost impish as he boasts of how much he was paid or imitates the Dorian Gray obsession of Karajan. At other times he is sombre, especially when he talks about his sister Hepzibah; his failure, as he sees it, to offer support when she was suffering; and the raging emotions that lay beneath what her brother called the reliable machine that never went wrong.

Sometimes he verges on the mawkish; elsewhere he is reflective in examining suffer-

ing: of the enslaved in displaced people's camps, of soldiers, lonely and wounded in hospital, of the victims of totalitarian states, of his own when his first marriage collapsed.

The life, however, is almost incidental. What the film brings out is the playing that shaped each chapter in this memoir: the infinitely varied vibrato, the elegant ease, the originality of phrasing and the sometimes savage accents. It is the music that soars out of these archives — great long stretches of it, some dating back to 1943, enough to make us understand why Menuhin, his talent almost suffocated by subsequent fame, so captured the hearts and souls of earlier generations.

Yehudi Menuhin: *The Violin of the Century*, from *La Sept/Arte* television and EMI Classics, is distributed by Ideal Audience

## Where there's Will

Hard by the Thames, schoolchildren are discovering Shakespeare their own way. Hilary Finch reports

The Globe Theatre, originally built in 1599 and destroyed by fire in 1613, is fast approaching its official reopening. The thatch is complete, the seating in place, and Shakespeare's great "Wooden O" is expanding to its full circumference. On Saturday, three days before Shakespeare's official birthday, the London borough of Southwark will celebrate with a "sonnet walk", a masque outside the Globe at 2pm, and a cathedral service at 6pm.

Meanwhile, 19 Southwark schools have been recreating that environment in six weeks of Elizabethan Fairs, held in collaboration with members of the Globe Education Centre. In the school hall of Robert



Browning Primary in Walworth, a trumpet heralds the nummers' play. A 10-year-old St George faces an 11-year-old black-cloaked Murderer. A quack doctor revives the saint and everyone cavorts in a round dance to a tape of Greensleeves.

Now the dance becomes

more sophisticated. A very tall, very thin bearded jester leads a troupe of children in an *Estampie*, a *Bransle* and a *Selling's Round*. The jester is Adrian Lucas, assistant school-keeper, who also happens to be a member of the Paladins of Chivalry, a re-enactment society which specialises in medieval tournaments. He's taught the children all the right steps, and they foot it fealty.

Meanwhile, a group of real thespians lurks outside the door. This is the Globe company in the making. They burst in. "Our theatre burnt down and we had to go touring," one shouts. "Not much fun. But soon we'll be able to return to the Globe,



Children at Robert Browning Primary School in Walworth get to know the Bard

and we need your help to get a play ready! We need dancers for our sheep-shearing fair. But look out for pickpockets!" Cue for Act IV, Scene 4 of *The Winter's Tale*. That snap-

per-up of unconsidered trifles has soon pinched a school scarf. A shepherd strikes up the school-keeper's dances. Ballads are sold. The troupe dances out with the children.

Alastair Tallon, education development manager at the Globe, watches as six years of Globe Education's projects bring Southwark to new life. "We want the Globe to be a catalyst for activities and work in the borough," he says. "Going to the theatre in Shakespeare's day was about popular culture and entertainment. We want to change people's perceptions about what happens in theatre and what happens in schools."

A project like this encourages teachers to teach Shakespeare way beyond the appallingly unimaginative Key Stage tests — to draw and build on real responses from the children.

Tesco shoppers in the Old Kent Road, Elephant & Castle Metro and Surrey Quays will be able to read all about it in a special newspaper written by the children and distributed free at the checkouts on Shakespeare's birthday.

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## THE TIMES ARTS

## THEATRE 1

Elvis — the Musical offers an exuberant romp through a life in music and pictures

## THEATRE 2

...while a new play at the Finborough presents a more acerbic side of American life

## A tribute fit for the King



The three ages of Elvis: from the left, Alexander Bar (young), P.J. Proby (mature) and Tim Whitnall (middle)

If we must have compendium shows, meaning number after number from Crooner A or Hot Gospeller B, then *Elvis* is about as slick and professional as the genre gets. It is a show fit for a king, or at least a king with a taste for bright lights, wiggling bobbysoxers, bustling film images, and lots of zippy rock. Indeed, it would probably have pleased the King himself, for no less than three singers have been deput-

ed to play him, scores of glamorous photos of his face flick across the backcloth, and nothing is said of the sad figure he cut in his last days.

If you want to learn about Presley the man, buy a biography. Jack Good and Ray Cooney's show hardly pauses for breath and, when it does, interesting information is the least of its aims. *Elvis* was born in Mississippi, got mega-successful, bought a pile called Graceland, went in and out of the army, made a questionably wise move to Hollywood, got married and divorced, died, was buried (and note his name is an anagram) "lives".

We hear nothing of his father, and all we are told about his mother is that she died of a heart attack when he was 46. But then Good, who was surely primus inter pares on the creative side, was the producer of *6.5 Special* and is more a music-and-picture than a words chap. At worst this means that meaningless

footage of Jubilee celebrations outside Buckingham Palace accompanies Elvis's birth announcement in 1935, or that photos of worried-looking pooches flash along in counterpoint to *Hound Dog*, or that the Taj Mahal, the Parthenon and the Pyramids briskly proclaim the permanence of rock'n'roll. And quite why a Southern preacher in the programme that Elvis's excesses "should have been kept private", and does his best here to shove them back in the closet, but he cannot

disguise the fact that about 14 men seem to be carrying that tiny boy's elephantine coffin to its grave. But it is his songs that matter. They come from Alexander Bar, a "young" Elvis especially good at romantically throbbing and palpitating; Tim Whitnall, an energetic "middle" Elvis who knows how to inject sexiness even into the little hiccup that often ends the King's musical phrases; and P.J. Proby's "mature" Elvis, a raddled, sepulchral, rather sinister figure who

appears to have jetted in from Transylvania in order to sink his tongue into the more lachrymose bits. *Heartbreak Hotel*, *Blue Suede Shoes*, *Love Me Tender*, *Jailhouse Rock*: almost as many numbers come hurtling pell-mell across the footlights as the King was devouring hamburgers at the end of his reign. Any nostalgia gourmet who leaves the theatre unstayed is probably unstable.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

## Lessons to be learnt?

Downton Paradise  
Finborough

THIS two-character play is the first production by Drama Audit, a company founded this year to bring the work of Welsh writers before London audiences. Wales is mentioned only once in it, and then as part of a joke when the Californian Jewish attorney tells her imprisoned black client that even in Wales people have heard of his struggle for freedom. Realising that he has no idea where Wales is, she explains that it is part of England.

In a programme note Martin Jenkins tells us that his play draws upon the true story of Fay Stender, a Jewish attorney who became the lover of a black activist named George Jackson. She refused to provide him with a gun when he planned a breakout from San Quentin, and for this "betrayal" was

shot by one of his associates. Her story provides several warning lessons, and the one you prefer probably depends on where you stand on matters racial, political, moral and even sensible. Jenkins's choice is to mount the play of a woman unable to see that she is being manipulated, and that the spirit of the early Seventies is moving beyond legal redress towards armed struggle.

There may be good reasons for not giving his characters the names of the originals, one being that Jenkins can invent his own confrontational dialogue. Passages in what he writes for Amanda Hurwitz and Richard D. Sharp ring fairly true, though he overdoes the red Jewish humour and goes boldly into black revolutionary statements without preparing us.

Hurwitz is bright and passionate. Sharp too fond of a dying fall at the end of his sentences; Sarah Edsall's direction is competent, but what do we learn? That lawyers should not just after clients? That Jews should stay clear of blacks? I'll certainly remember that advice. Characters that are part invented, part real try to have it both ways but end up taking us nowhere.

JEREMY KINGSTON

## Passion on the fringe

Emilia Galotti  
Courtyard, NI

AFTER Aristotle, Gothold Lessing (1729-1781) must be the most influential critic in the history of world drama, single-handedly founding the national theatre of his homeland and booting French models off the stage. *Jeremy Kingston* writes, French models, that is, of how a play should be written.

Of course it took more than his volumes of critical works to do the job, and he became a dramatist to demonstrate his argument that extremes of passion were not the preserve of Ancient Rome. Love can be enjoyed by the middle classes just as readily and just as tragically, as we discover in this, his third play.

Sooner death than grief and dishonour is what Emilia, a colonel's daughter, decides, when faced with a

future as a prince's mistress on what was intended to be her wedding day.

Exit on her father's dagger. With Christopher Hyman's adroit production the Tricycle Theatre Co makes a most promising debut on the fringe theatre scene. The setting is modern, and while princes are not the slaves of love to quite this degree in the contemporary world, the moments of dawning sexuality can just about be felt for a girl in slingshots and a sleeveless short dress. Lucina Raikes, raking the world with huge eyes, catches the apprehensions of someone who is torn between instruction and desire.

The Prince could be played as a middle-aged sensualist but, by casting Tim Faulkner, who looks to be a twentysomething, the character becomes a vacillating greenhorn, often comical, though clearly the object of Lessing's scorn.

Equally so is Marinelli, the Prince's scheming Chamberlain-cum-royal-pimp, played with a tart, contemptuous relish by Martin McKellan. To what extent Lessing holds the "rigidly virtuous" colonel to blame for his daughter's decision to kill herself remains uncertain.

## LONDON

**SPRING LOADED** This innovative dance season continues with a new and inventive programme from the Mark Baldwin Dance Company, including the London premiere of *Lash*, a wild comedy with its roots in boogie, and *Mirrors*, a witty, double-bill on mirrors. The repertoire also features *Wagon*, inspired by Monteverdi's *Vespers* and the rhythmic music of *Hommage*. Places, Dukes Road, WC1 (0171-387 0031). Tonight and tomorrow, 8pm.

**PASTORAL HANDEL** Trevor Pincock directs the English Concert and Choir in Handel's pastoral *Acis and Galatea*. Barbican Theatre and Harewood. (0171-387 0031). Tonight and tomorrow, 8pm.

**SALAD DAYS** Welcome return of Julian Sedgwick's musical, *Salad Days*, which includes the hit *Salad Days* and the new *Salad Days*. Venue: 119 Upper Street, N1 (0171-252 1010). Tue-Sat, 8pm. Sun, 2pm. Sun, 3pm. Sun, 5pm.

**AN INSPECTOR CALLS** Stephen Dillane's powerful production, with Nicholas Woodson as the all-knowing Inspector, and Edward Peel and Susan Engel as the pillars of society. Venue: 119 Upper Street, N1 (0171-252 1010). Tue-Sat, 8pm. Sun, 2pm. Sun, 3pm. Sun, 5pm.

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**OPERA**  
**Medea event:**  
Cherubini's great  
classical tragedy  
is superbly  
staged by Opera  
North in Leeds



**DANCE**  
**The genius of**  
**Frederick Ashton**  
is celebrated  
at Covent Garden  
in an evening  
of mixed fortunes

# THE TIMES ARTS



**CONCERTS**  
**John Cage is**  
featured as  
the "prepared  
piano" makes  
its comeback at  
the Purcell Room



**POP**  
**Seattle grungers,**  
but sane? Can  
the Presidents  
of the United  
States of America  
be for real?

## A woman scorned is a marvel

**OPERA:** In Leeds, Rodney Milnes sees Josephine Barstow produce a performance of rare power as Medea

It is turning out to be a good month for classical tragedy filtered through 18th-century operatic sensibilities: first Gluck's *Alceste* from Scottish Opera, and now Cherubini's *Medée* at the Grand in Leeds. Both are dread words — "important" operas, and both are great operas, but their greatness is hard to convey to modern audiences. Scottish Opera didn't quite make it: Opera North's *Medea* is in most respects an absolute knockout.

*Medea* was premiered in Paris in 1797, when, in the cultural fallout from the French Revolution, it was perfectly acceptable for a serious opera to include spoken dialogue. This was less acceptable in the 19th century, and *Medea* survived in a hideously corrupt version with bad German recitative written 60 years later; translated into Italian, it became a vehicle for such scenery-chewers as Callas. Only in recent decades has the original French score been revived (but never recorded), often with non-French Medeas struggling with the words as best they could: Covent Garden's stab at the opera seven years ago was not generally accounted a success.

So what on earth do you do with so endlessly tricky a piece? Easy: you perform it in a superb new English translation by Kenneth McLeish and cast Josephine Barstow as Medea. Then you add the conductor Paul Daniel, the producer Phyllida Lloyd and the tenor Thomas Randle, who struck such sparks off each other in Opera North's *Gloriana*, and sit back as the brew bubbles to overflowing.

The goalposts have of course been moved since 1797. Then, *Medea*'s homicidal tendencies — she's a woman, for heaven's sake — would have been profoundly abnormal and shocking; today, when Alan Bennett has isolated "the problem of the first wife" when writing about a rather different marriage (Orton and Halliwell), it seems less abnormal. *Medea* has "made" Jason: she's stolen the Golden Fleece for him, done the odd murder to help him on his way, and now he's trading her in for a younger, socially more advanta-

geous model, and removing her children. Many in the audience will be rooting for Medea from the word go.

I am being only half facetious, but Lloyd of course paints a broader picture. Set (Ian MacNeil) and costumes (Kandis Cook) present a smug, starchy 18th-century court society whose disintegration on a whirling revolve in the finale is terrifying, and deserved. Lloyd's actual direction is a masterpiece of art concealing art: you hardly notice it at all, but just believe completely in everything that is happening onstage. Only one or two over-smart light-changes disturb the seamless dramatic flow.

Barstow is a mistress of disbelief-suspension. She can chew the scenery with the best of them, but here as so often it is the moments of stillness that strike terror, the moments when she conveys the murderous thought processes behind the eyes. Her cast-iron technique sees her safely through the notes, and she speaks the text with a vibrant conviction that should be the envy of many a straight actress.

Randle heroically plays Jason as the rat he is, and gets by in hugely demanding vocal writing. Nicola Sharkey (Dirce, the younger model) has to negotiate Constanze-style coloratura, and manages it neatly while still doing justice to McLeish's words. Norman Bailey is the stuffy King, and Anne Wilkens sings Medea's Nurse, making much of her lovely aria with bassoon obbligato.

Beethoven greatly admired Cherubini, and, as conducted by Daniel, this *Medea* could well have been a long-lost Beethoven opera. Tense, febrile, full of suspense, the music bounded out of the pit and gripped the audience with its truly revolutionary inventiveness. And Daniel paced it perfectly, welding potentially dodgy transitions between music, spoken word and *mélodrame* into a perfectly coherent dramatic whole. Orchestra and chorus supported him with a will. Cherubini has truly been reborn in Leeds.



Josephine Barstow as Medea: "Her cast-iron technique sees her safely through the notes, and she speaks the text with a vibrant conviction that should be the envy of many a straight actress"

## Two lessons and a conundrum

**DANCE:** Debra Craine sees the Royal Ballet continue its celebration of Ashton's choreographic legacy

A lot of ground is covered in the Royal Ballet's new triple bill celebrating the genius of its founder-choreographer, Frederick Ashton. *Symphonic Variations* is there to show us his glorious abstraction. *The Dream* has exquisite handling of narrative and character. But what are we to make of *Illuminations*, which opens the bill?

Ashton choreographed Britten's song cycle *Les Illuminations*, a setting of Rimbaud's strangely fantastic verse (here sung by John Bowen), for New York City Ballet in 1950, a fact that probably accounts for the work's uncharacteristic signature. The familiar Ashton style — fleet footwork, angled shoulders, compact jumps, miniature decoration — here gives way to broadly written phrases of large, open movement and crude expressivity. The Poet's rebellion is physically manifested in frantic floppiness, his coupling with Propane Love is realised in the basest of body language — complete with gross and unnecessary gestures.

Seen here at Covent Garden for the first time in more than a decade, *Illuminations* emerges as a curio. Cecil Beaton's original Pierrot-inspired designs are wonderfully exuberant, even though the intervening decades have given some of his costumes more than a hint of transvestite karaoke (you couldn't get away with men in bare chests and ruffs in all seriousness today). And although the choreography does not transcend the conditions of its creation, the ballet does give us access to Ashton's wackier outer limits.

One could have wished for a better choice of Poet than Jonathan Cope for this revival. As fine a dancer as he is, this is not a role for him. Cope needs to assert himself through constantly moving shapes: on Monday night he was clearly not in sympathy with the work's posed historicism. Darcey Bussell (as Sacred Love) and Benazir Hussein (as Propane Love) were well matched in the long legs department, enticing the Poet with their voluptuous, wide-ranging arabesques (albeit with different goals in mind).

*Symphonic Variations* (to the Franck score) was created in 1946 for Covent Garden, a pure dance work that stands among Ashton's finest achievements. A virtual reaffirmation of the richness of harmony, *Symphonic Variations* is filled with unshakeable confidence in the order of the universe. On Monday it was hard to appreciate

its symmetry, so undisciplined was the performance. Were the six dancers just under-rehearsed (the women were better than the men), or are they really so out of synch with classical ideals? And does Viviana Durante have to look so grim when she is dancing so well from the neck down?

*The Dream* is always a favourite with Covent Garden audiences, and so it proved again on opening night. Ashton's skill at distilling narrative into danced essentials is brilliant: so, too, is his ability to



Jonathan Howells as the Dandy in Ashton's *Illuminations*

write individual detailing into each of his characters. Mendelssohn's score was filled with lively colouring under Leslie Dunner's baton, and David Walker's designs still look ravishingly pretty.

Leanne Benjamin was flighty and volatile as Titania, while her dancing was incredibly voluble. Tetsuya Kumakawa loves to show us how he can spin, but he has yet to learn that Oberon is about more than arrogant exhibitionism. The quartet of lovers (Genesis Rosato, Tracy Brown, Christopher Saunders and Adam Cooper) were outstanding, as was the corps de ballet of fairies.

**POP:** The home of gloomy grunge sends us the Mount Rushmore of happy rock; the finer points of 'nuevo flamenco'

## Monster raving loony party

THEY come from Seattle, a repository in recent years of all that is dark, twisted and tortured in rock. And their bass-heavy guitar sound is a close relative of the grunge formula ("We rock" is one of their proudest boasts). But the Presidents of the United States of America are the light-hearted flipside of the macho grunge coin.

With sales of their eponymous debut album past the two-million mark in America, and a second hit single, *Peaches*, slamming into the British charts this week, they have clearly struck a major chord with music-lovers who have heard enough about the worries of the world and now

**The Presidents of the USA**  
Astoria, WC2

simply want to have a good time.

A trio mustering just five guitar strings between them — Chris Ballew plays a two-stringed "basitar", Dave Dederer plays a three-stringed "guitbass" and Jason Finn plays a "no-string" drum-kit — the Presidents took to the Astoria stage wearing bright shirts and baggy shorts. Opening with a storming version of the MCS's *Kick Out the Jams* that inspired immediate

and delirious pandemonium in the rammed-full, 2,000-capacity venue, they proceeded to play a set of high-energy rock'n'roll with a unique, goof-ball spin that was impossible to dislike.

The high point of a brisk, varied and supremely entertaining show was the sudden segue from the quirky *Naked and Famous* into a whiplash version of their first British hit, *Lump*. As wave after wave of crowd surfers broke against the wall of security men at the foot of the stage, the band's manifesto came across loud and clear. The Presidents rock.

DAVID SINCLAIR

AN AWOVED admirer, John McLaughlin has compared his one-time collaborator Paco de Lucia to a blues guitarist, capable of wringing infinite emotion from a basic repertoire of three or four chords. I don't suppose that the young B.B. King ever spent much time in Andalusia, and de Lucia has probably never jammed in a Beale Street blues club, but the similarities between the two traditions are indeed startling.

Listening to the modal textures in Lucia's absorbing brand of jazzed-up "nuevo flamenco" it was also impossible to ignore a further parallel — with Indian ragas. Some flamenco purists are said to be unhappy with the course de Lucia has taken, accusing him of selling out to foreign audiences. His decision to add the

## United notions

**Paco de Lucia**  
Festival Hall

electric bass to his backing group seems to have provoked almost as much consternation as the young Bob Dylan's defection to the electric guitar. All of which might lead you to expect to expect something akin to the pop hooks and disco beat of crowd pleasers such as the Gypsy Kings. Well, Lucia does make use of a nimble light show in the darkened auditorium, but the

overall approach was relatively austere, especially in a first half largely given over to solo pieces and extended duets.

Later, de Lucia deployed his full complement of guitars, bass and percussion supplemented by the muezlin-like vocals of his brother Pepe and the keening saxophone of Jorge Pardo. The compositions took on a less frenetic character, the jagged, staccato attack balanced by gently rippling arpeggios.

This was not the tourist version of flamenco. Whenever the tall, charismatic figure of Joaquin Grilo took the centre of the stage it was for displays that were hypnotic, not histrionic. The dance was not allowed to upstage the music.

CLIVE DAVIS

## Out of the Cage

NO PROGRAMME featuring the prepared piano could ignore its "inventor", John Cage, and it was appropriate that Sunday's concert by the pianist Kate Ryder and soprano Sara Stowe opened with a group of his little-performed early masterworks. The enterprising performers make a versatile duo: Ryder doubled as percussionist and a second voice. Stowe also played the piano, mandolin and casta-

nets. Their programme, entitled *Sound-Moving-Sound*, made physical and visual use of the Purcell Room stage, transforming the concert at times into drama.

Cage proved almost conventional, and the presentation of his music here was straightforward. It was also very

satisfying, especially in Ryder's virtuoso playing of *Daughters of the Lonesome Isle*, the dusky timbres of the prepared piano still work their spell.

Stowe sang the haunting vocalise of *A Flower* in pure voice, though each phrase was interestingly coloured. She was communicative in the strange lyrics of *Eight Whiskus*, and vivid in *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* and *Nowth Upon Nacht*, settings from *Finnegans Wake*.

The same James Joyce work has inspired a new piano piece by the young Irish composer

**CONCERT**  
**Ryder/Stowe**  
Purcell Room

Deirdre Gribbin, *Waking in Laughtears*, given its premiere here. The opposite emotions of the title are powerfully evoked in richly textured music.

Much more limited in their expression were the pieces by Jeremy Peyton-Jones, Karla Tsepkenko and Giacinto Scelsi. The two Peyton-Jones numbers amounted to little more than dreary mood music, and Tsepkenko's *Evening Patience* tested mine. The onomatopoeic vocal sounds devised by Scelsi in *Ogloudoglu* and *CKCKC* lack the rich variety of Berio's comparable *Sequenza III*.

The final work, Graham Fitkin's neo-Romantic *Nasir*, is an impressive setting of lines from Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the grim tale matched in music that evokes harsh heat and dust. Stowe's soprano soared vibrantly right to the end of this duo's demanding programme.

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Are you a bright, confident individual who would like to join a growing company in the field of investor Relations and Stockbroking? We require a team player to join our Computer experience (Macintosh) and good communication skills are essential. Job includes data research and management, client contact, travel arrangements and all office administration. Would suit somebody with a bright outgoing personality who enjoys a busy, varied working environment. Stockbroking experience and/or SFA registration would be preferable but not obligatory.

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### NEW HOMES

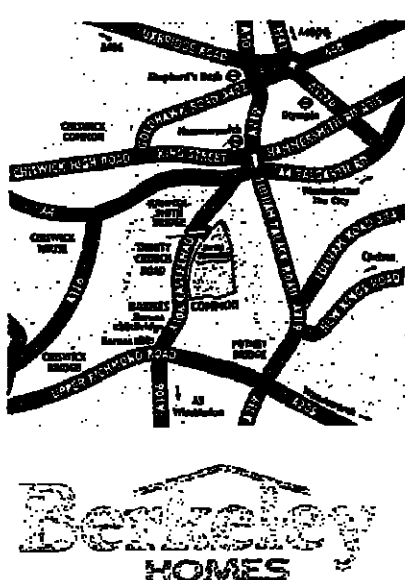


If you don't know Barnes you might be pleasantly surprised. Not only will you find Barnes to be an attractive London 'village', with classical architecture, pond and specialist shops, but it is also the home of Barnes Waterside. This spectacular development of classically inspired apartments, townhouses and detached houses is enviably located adjacent to over 100 acres of lakes and reed beds, a unique sanctuary for wildlife.

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### NEW HOMES

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Construction is at an early stage, so you'll need to use your imagination, but right now any enhancement of the already high specification is possible with HomeMaker.

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0181 877 9006  
(24 hours)



**Steve Ovett has added a thriving cottage industry to his historical home, reports Rachel Kelly**

The house was built by John

**Gold-medal buy:** Kinnmount House, the Border home of Steve and Rachel Ovett, was built in 1812 for the Marquess of Queensberry. It is now on sale for £1.3 million

His son, Lord Alfred Douglas, was infamous for his links with Oscar Wilde, who was a frequent visitor to Kinmount; Wilde's associ-

Designed by Sir Robert Smirke, architect of the British Museum, Kinnmount boasts a great hall, a reception hall, a ballroom with domed ceiling, a billiard room, an orangery and ten bedrooms. Its elegant, Neo-Classical façade is rather spoilt by some top-heavy balustrading added at the turn of the century. There is also an aviary and a courtyard which the Ovetts have developed into their holiday cottages.

This has been their trump card. There is everything a family could want, down to high-chairs and electric blankets, tumble dryers and hairdryers. Prices vary, depending on dates and length of stay, but start at £195 a week for two people.

However, the time has come to sell. The Overts wish for a smaller house to enable the whole family to do more travelling together. Mrs Overt says: "My husband spends much time abroad commentating on sporting events for American television, but travelling is difficult when you are leaving behind such a large house."

The family intend to stay in the area, but if the record of other recent Scottish sales is anything to go by, their move may be slow to materialise. Eilean Aigas, near Inverness, a romantic island kingdom, took 18 months to sell. The Fraser family eventually sold the house at the end of 1994, having dropped the guide price from £800,000 to £600,000.

**Kames Castle**, on the Isle of Bute is on sale with 20 acres and seven letting units for offers of more than £520,000 with Knight Frank. It has been on the market for a year.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) expects prices to drop back from the current price of £2,000 an acre to the 1992 level of £1,000.

The exact acreage affected is uncertain, as statistics are unavailable, but Martin Lowry, the RICS's rural property spokesman, says it is a regional problem. "The mainly arable south and east of the country will see less of a problem."

"For several years, smaller farmers have been moving out of dairy farming and into raising beef cattle. This has fitted in nicely with environmental pressures as beef grazing uses the kind of small landscapes which we all like to see in the countryside. There is no ready alternative for beef farmers, so if the problem continues the countryside could be facing a difficult future."

Mr Lowry says the crisis has had no effect on the price of organic farms, but agents confirmed that numbers of farm sales had fallen off. Nicholas Hextall, director of John D. Wood's Oxford office, says that farmers are waiting before committing themselves to farm sales.

The expected fall in land values follows an extraordinary boom in prices over the past two years, thanks to European subsidies and a shortage of land. Savills reports that the average value of land with vacant possession rose by 50 per cent in the first half of 1995.

The year-on-year increase now stands at 22 per cent, with a total increase since the middle of 1993 of 48 per cent. With a buoyant farmland market it has made sense to split up large estates, with the main house selling separately from its farmland, says Crispin Holbrow from Savills.

RACHEL KELLY

[illegible]



## NEW HOMES

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## LONDON RENTALS

**ST JOHN'S WOOD** New 2 bed flat, 2 bath, 10' x 10' kitchen, 10' x 10' living room, 10' x 10' bedroom, 10' x 10' bathroom, 10' x 10' terrace, 10' x 10' parking space. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

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## NEW HOMES

## COUNTRY RENTALS

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**WANTED** by professional couple (GSM) part / furnished 2 or 3 bedroom house in village, no children, no pets, 10' x 10' kitchen, 10' x 10' living room, 10' x 10' bedroom, 10' x 10' bathroom, 10' x 10' terrace, 10' x 10' parking space. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

## COUNTRY RENTALS

**EAST ANGLIA** 1st floor ground floor house on 1000 sq ft, 10' x 10' kitchen, 10' x 10' living room, 10' x 10' bedroom, 10' x 10' bathroom, 10' x 10' terrace, 10' x 10' parking space. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

**BERKS** 1st floor ground floor house on 1000 sq ft, 10' x 10' kitchen, 10' x 10' living room, 10' x 10' bedroom, 10' x 10' bathroom, 10' x 10' terrace, 10' x 10' parking space. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

## COUNTRY RENTALS

**SHROPSHIRE** 10 miles north of Shrewsbury, 10' x 10' kitchen, 10' x 10' living room, 10' x 10' bedroom, 10' x 10' bathroom, 10' x 10' terrace, 10' x 10' parking space. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

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## FRANCE

**CRUSE / CORREZE** Spacious farmhouse set in 2,000 sq metres of land, 10' x 10' kitchen, 10' x 10' living room, 10' x 10' bedroom, 10' x 10' bathroom, 10' x 10' terrace, 10' x 10' parking space. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

**ENTIRELY RENOVATED** - Living room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, gas central heating, new roof, cellar, garage. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

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**OLD COUNTRY HOUSE** With out building set in its own grounds, 10' x 10' kitchen, 10' x 10' living room, 10' x 10' bedroom, 10' x 10' bathroom, 10' x 10' terrace, 10' x 10' parking space. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

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## GIBRALTAR

**TAYLOR WOODROW** 10' x 10' kitchen, 10' x 10' living room, 10' x 10' bedroom, 10' x 10' bathroom, 10' x 10' terrace, 10' x 10' parking space. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

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## PORTUGAL

**PEACEFUL** Alentejo, 24 hrs Lisbon, 50 minutes to airport, 10' x 10' kitchen, 10' x 10' living room, 10' x 10' bedroom, 10' x 10' bathroom, 10' x 10' terrace, 10' x 10' parking space. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

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## SPAIN

**JAVIER MONSIEUR** 10' x 10' kitchen, 10' x 10' living room, 10' x 10' bedroom, 10' x 10' bathroom, 10' x 10' terrace, 10' x 10' parking space. £1,200 p.w. 0171 480 8807.

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# Thrilling Day gives Graham moment to cherish

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

THE old adage that well-named horses are rewarded with victory in the best races was underlined yesterday when Thrilling Day provided Neil Graham with the most significant success of his training career by winning the Shadwell Stakes at Newmarket.

Nitpickers will point to the fact that Minister Son, the 1988 St Leger winner, was technically trained by Graham, but the Newmarket handler would be the first to acknowledge that he was holding the fort temporarily vacated by Dick Hern at the time of the classic success.

Anyone doubting how much Thrilling Day's short-head triumph meant to him only had to see the smile which lit up his cherubic features in the winner's enclosure.

"The owner [Lady Tavistock] said last season she hoped we would have some thrilling days with her and now we have had four," he enthused. "Today was very much the object of the exercise. If she got the trip, we were confident she would run well."

The doubt over her stamina.

underlined by her failure to stay the seven furlongs of the Rowley Mile last autumn, saw David Harrison hold up Thrilling Day towards the rear of the field as Willie Carson set a scorching pace on Birt Salsabil. As the 11 runners entered the Dip, Carson's tactics looked to have paid off as he had most of his rivals floundering.

## RICHARD EVANS

Nap: **WORLD PREMIER** (3.40 Newmarket)  
Next best: **Master Boots** (5.20 Newmarket)

However, when Harrison switched Thrilling Day towards the outside and she saw daylight the effect was immediate. Making up three lengths inside the final furlong, she caught Birt Salsabil in the final strides and, at 20-1, was the longest priced winner of the 1,000 Guineas trial.

Although the outcome of the race had little impact on the betting for the first filies

classic, the excellent run by the stoutly-bred Birt Salsabil saw her promoted to favourite for the Oaks by the big bookmakers, with Coral going as short as 5-1.

Graham, 35, who has 29 horses in his care, started training in his own right late in 1989 after serving as assistant to Hern and his former governor looked set to be making the headlines tomorrow by running Alhaarth, the odds-on favourite for the 2,000 Guineas, in the Craven Stakes rather than risk encountering soft ground in the Greenham Stakes at Newbury on Saturday.

When Hern won the colts' classic with Nashwan in 1989 he did not bother with a prep race but Angus Gold, racing manager to Hamdan Al-Maktoum, the owner of Alhaarth, explained yesterday: "Nashwan did everything generously at home while Alhaarth is a pretty idle horse who only does enough. He has been working very well and Dick could not be happier with him, but this race will sharpen him up."

Walter Swinburn's recovery

from an horrendous riding accident in Hong Kong is progressing satisfactorily but, after seeing his doctor yesterday, he has ruled out returning to race riding for the Guineas meeting in just over two weeks' time.

"It's disappointing but the sensible thing to do. I will be back sometime in May," Swinburn said. The delayed comeback means Barry Hills will need to find another jockey to ride the Maktoum Al-Maktoum-owned Royal Applause in the 2,000 Guineas.

Passion For Life made a successful transition from handicap to listed company when making all the running in the Abernethy Stakes and is now likely to contest valuable races in Germany rather than opting for Royal Ascot.

The growing belief that Henry Cecil is poised for a cracking season was reinforced when he landed the opening Constant Security Maiden Stakes with Sherpas and the concluding Museum Maiden Stakes with Doves, both owned by Khalid Abdulla.



Thrilling Day (left) lends off Birt Salsabil by a short head in yesterday's Nell Gwyn Stakes at Newmarket

## NEWMARKET

**2.00 Kery Ring**  
**2.35 TARAFA** (nap)  
**3.05 Restructure**

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 4.15 OPERA BUFF.

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 2.00 Kery Ring, 3.05 SMART ALEC (nap), 4.45 Wooderie.

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE

TOTE JACKPOT MEETING

**2.00 GEOFFREY BARLING MAIDEN FILLES STAKES** (3-Y-O fillies: £4,615; 7f) (17 runners)

101 (1) 30 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
102 (2) 40 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
103 (3) 50 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
104 (4) 60 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
105 (5) 70 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
106 (6) 80 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
107 (7) 90 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
108 (8) 100 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
109 (9) 110 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
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117 (17) 190 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
118 (18) 200 BALDUSTAR 174 (R) (S) W Woods 8-11 W Woods 8-11  
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# Optical illusion highlighted by Premiership leaders' change of strip

## Colour code taxes United's grey matter

I have long sneered at golf, asking how it can be considered a sport when its players wear pink polyester trousers. But the argument is losing its force as football players are now almost as badly turned out as golfers.

Matters came to a head on Saturday with the great Manchester United away-kit drama. Having worn just about every colour in the spectrum over the past half-dozen seasons — black with a yellow trim, yellow-and-green squares, and blue and white — they came up with a real wow.

Dead sexy, eh? The John Major strip. It was designed not for football but to look cool with jeans. And the footballers hated it. Desperate times require desperate measures. Three goals down at half-time on Saturday, they changed shirts, back to the old blue-and-white job. They still lost, but at least they knew who to blame.

### MIDWEEK VIEW



SIMON BARNES

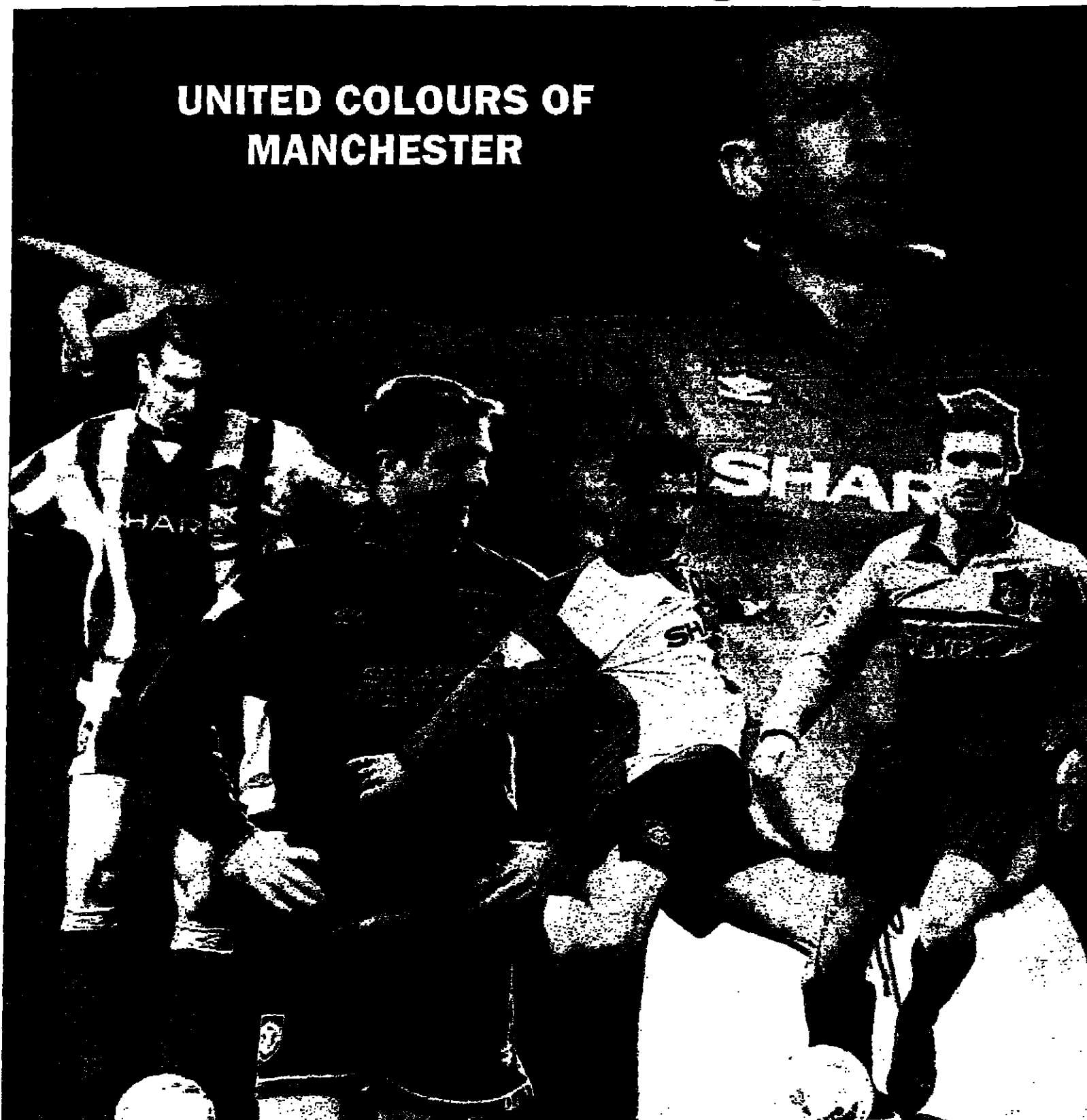
Alex Ferguson, the United manager, had approved the change, in response to Lord-knows-what piteous agonies in the dressing-room. And he, quixotically, attempted to defend the change on purely rational grounds. "You can't pick people out at a distance. Players just blend into the crowd."

The argument falls down when you reflect that Manchester United's huge marketing operation aims to sell replica Manchester United shirts to everyone in the whole world. A match at Old Trafford is played by men in red shirts against a background of 50,000 people, all in red shirts.

If you were to choose a colour purely for its optical benefits, there would be only one choice — white. If I may put on my safari hat (green) for the next couple of paragraphs, I will explain why.

Because of the arrangement of rods and cones in the eye, your peripheral vision is particularly good at picking out movement, less good at seeing colour. Most of our fellow mammals lack colour vision altogether, but they are very sharp indeed at picking up faint movement.

Watch an antelope or a rabbit run away from you. What do you see? A flashing



UNITED COLOURS OF MANCHESTER

white burn. White is the danger signal and it is chosen because it is the easiest to pick up, especially at the edge of your vision. Moral: when you go on safari with me, don't wear white. The game will spot us a mile off.

The same rule holds good for football. If you want to be aware of flying colleagues on the edge of your vision, to have what commentators call "great awareness", remember that the whiter they are, the easier they are to spot.

Now the obvious conclusion to draw from all this is that Leeds United are the finest passing side in the FA Cup Premiership, so we are forced to the conclusion that there are

other considerations. Red is far and away the most popular colour for a football shirt and United, on the toss of a coin, have won the right to wear it against Liverpool in the FA Cup Final. It is chosen for psychological rather than physiological reasons: its association with aggression, pomp, triumph and blood.

The traditional football shirt was designed to give an advantage to its wearer: the present shirts are designed to give an advantage to their seller. Footballing considerations are remote from the minds of strip-designers. You can't even read the numbers at Newcastle or Southampton.

Clothes are part of what a person is: that counts double for all uniforms. In rugby, both codes, players want to give an impression of overwhelming bulk. You would therefore expect rugby players to favour horizontal stripes, to emphasise massive chests and shoulders — an elementary optical illusion — and that is why rugby players wear hooped shirts.

In football, bulk is not as important as height. Vertical stripes make you look taller. Footballers mainly prefer stripes to hoops. Les Ferdinand, bearing down in the goalkeeping on Sunday in black-and-white stripes, looked like a rampaging giant.

All this is very rational, but what has rationality got to do with it? In sport, what matters is not whether a thing is true, but whether it is believed. Manchester United players believe their grey strip is unlucky and the belief has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Their Premiership record in the grey strip has been four losses and a draw in five games — the grey strip has cost them 14 points.

When I played for the mighty Gwai-lung team in Hong Kong, we always wore all white because white is the Chinese funeral colour. Opponents hated it. Worth a goal start, it was.

Manchester United and Umbro for ripping off the supporters. Agreed, it is all highly distasteful, but hear a plain fact: it is not compulsory to buy a Manchester United shirt. Good old United are bringing out not one, not two but three new strips next season. There will be a new red strip for home games, the blue-and-white will be phased out halfway through, and now the John Major strip will be replaced by a white one.

Good move. Chinese sides will have no chance against them, the supporters will still look cool in jeans and players will have phenomenal awareness. Don't wear the damn things on safari, that's all.

## Hall wins in adversity

DARREN HALL, trying to follow England's bronze in the team event with another medal in the men's singles, overcame flu, some controversial officiating and the most dangerous floater in the draw to reach the second round of the European badminton championships here in Herning, Denmark yesterday (Richard Eaton writes).

The former European champion, from Essex, who is the No 3 seed in the event, beat Pontus Jantti, the world No 30 from Finland, 15-12, 15-8, but he needed to see the doctor as soon as the contest was over.

"I woke up with a sore

throat, feeling giddy and seeing black stars. I was very worried," Hall said. He found himself 12-6 down in the first game and was struggling when an incident in which he appeared to be wrongly penalised for touching the net with his racket paradoxically worked in his favour. His angry protest earned him a warning from the umpire, but it also acted as extra motivation. "The adrenalin came into my system and I felt better after that," he said.

Anne Gibson, the first Scot to be seeded in the European women's singles, withdrew with a knee injury.

### WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 44

**HARDTAIL**

(c) American Wild West slang for a mule. "Hardtails are mules, usually old ones. So named because they show little response to the skinner's whip. Young mules are shavetails."

**NIBUNG**

(a) A Malaysian palm, *Oncosperma filamentosa*. "We made very good curry: stewing it with the heart of a nibung or cabbage tree."

**KEATING**

(b) The proprietary name of an insect powder. An eponym of Thomas Keating, the 19th-century chemist who invented the stuff to make cockroaches turn over and point their legs at the sky. "I am in England. I shall sleep in a clean white bed, and I shall not have to use Keating."

**LORAN**

(c) A hyperbolic navigation system employing the difference in the times of arrival of pulsed radio signals from different stations. An acronym made from initial letters of long-range navigation. "Get a Loran fix," Peter Spence had his face glued into the rubber cypher of the Loran. He counted the jumping electric lines and the long-number blips. He then transferred his eyes to the Loran map."

### SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1 Rxf7! Rxf7 2 Bxg6! Kxg6 3 Qx3! Kx3 4 Bc4! Kf6 5 Qf5! and mate follows.

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## Coward's eye view of life

Noel Coward — From His Diaries. Radio 4, 8.05pm.

Among Simon Cadell's bequests to us are happy memories of his beleaguered holiday camp entertainments manager in *Hi-De-Hi!*. I remember him best, however, for his polished work in Coward plays. He was vocally non-imitative of the master, concentrating instead on his sophisticated spirit. Cadell's mastery of Coward's thoughts on Staveacre. The first generous helping includes Coward's thoughts on the Princess Margaret's wedding (the Queen scowled a good deal), the West's wartime alliance with the Soviet Union (we are going to have a hell of a time with them) and the universal decay of values (there are no standards left but in the *Ewing Standard*).

Voices: Thomas Quasthoff. Radio 3, 10.15pm.

A couple of weeks ago, thanks to Radio 3, we were memorably reminded why, in January, a Wigmore Hall audience clapped their hands sore and cheered themselves hoarse, and why the more discerning critics ran out of superlatives. What united audience and critics was the Wigmore Hall debut of Thomas Quasthoff, the German baritone. Tonight's recording is of the recital's second half, songs by Wolf and Richard Strauss. Charles Spencer accompanied songs by Wolf and Richard Strauss. The reason we hear only about 25 minutes of actual song is that the rest of the time is taken up by ovation.

### RADIO 1

FM Stereo. 4.00am Clive Warren 6.30 Chris Evans 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whalley. incl. at 12.30-12.45pm Newsbeat 2.00 Nicky Campbell 4.00 Mark Goodier. incl. at 5.30-5.45 Newsbeat 7.00 Evening Session 9.00 Alan Parker — Road Warrior 10.00 Mark Radcliffe 12.00 Wendy Lloyd

### RADIO 2

FM Stereo. 8.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.15 Pause for Thought 9.30 Ken Bruce 11.30 Jimmy Young 1.00pm Debbie Thorne 3.30 Ed Stewart 5.00 John Dunn 7.00 Jim Lloyd with Fob on 2 8.00 Supersong Parable (3/4) 8.30 Leaders Tapes (4/4) 9.00 Cajun Clubhouse (5/5) 9.30 Nigel Ogden 10.30 The Jamesons 12.00am Steve Macdonald. incl. Pause for Thought 3.00 Alan Lester

### RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 The Breakfast Programme. incl. 6.55, 7.55 Racing preview 8.35 The Magazines with Diana Maitland. incl. 10.25 Express 11.30 Wildlife News with Euan McIvor 12.00 Midday with Mair. incl. at 12.30pm Moneycheck and at 1.15 Entertainment News 2.05 Russia on 2 3.05 Russia Returns incl. Racing from Newmarket 3.45 Entertainment News 4.00 John Inverdale Nationwide. incl. at 5.45 Entertainment News 7.00 News Extra. incl. at 7.20 sport 7.35 Tiger Brown's Football Night 10.05 News Talk 11.00 Night Extra incl. at 11.15 Financial World Tonight 12.05am After Hours 2.05 Up All Night

### TALK RADIO

6.30am The Breakfast Show with Paul Ross 10.00 Scott Chisholm 1.00pm Anna Raeburn 3.00 Tommy Boyd 5.00 Peter Dingley 7.00 Sport 10.00 James White 1.00 Ian Collins

### WORLD SERVICE

All times in BST. 5.00am Newsdesk 5.30 Europe Today 6.00 Newsdesk 6.30 Europe Today 7.00 News 7.15 The World Today 7.30 Megamix 8.00 News 8.15 On the Shelf 8.30 Discovery 9.00 News in German 9.15 Concert Hall 10.00 News 10.05 Business 10.15 Andy Kershaw 10.45 Sports Roundup 11.00 Newsdesk 11.30 BBC English 11.45 On the Shelf 12.00 Newsdesk 12.30pm Thirty-Minute Drama 1.00 News in German 1.30 Composer of the Month 2.00 Newsdesk 3.00 News 3.05 Outlook 3.30 Megamix 4.00 News 4.05 Sports Roundup 4.15 BBC English 4.30 News in German 5.00 Europe Today 5.30 Business 5.45 Britain Today 6.00 News 6.10 World Today 6.25 Science 6.30 News in German 7.00 Newsdesk 7.30 Discovery 8.00 Newsdesk 8.30 News 9.01 Outlook 9.25 Words of Faith 9.30 Multitrack X Press 10.00 News 10.05 Business 10.15 Britain Today 10.30 Newsdesk 11.00 Newsdesk 11.30 World Today 11.45 Sports Roundup 12.00 News 12.05am Science 12.15 Country Style 12.30 Multitrack X Press 1.00 Newsdesk 1.30 From Our Own Correspondent 1.45 Britain Today 2.00 Newsdesk 2.30 Outlook 2.55 Word of Faith 3.00 Newsdesk 3.30 Megamix 4.00 News 4.15 Sport 4.30 Europe Today

### CLASSIC FM

4.00am Mark Griffiths 6.00 Mike Read 7.00 Henry Kelly 12.00 Susan Ash-Simmons 2.00pm Concerto 3.00 James Cok 6.00 Newswright 6.30 Sonata 7.00 Gardening Forum (t) 8.00 Evening Concert 10.00 Michael Mappen 1.00am Mel Cooper

### VIRGIN RADIO

6.00am Russ 'n' Jono 9.00 Richard Skinner 12.00 Graham Dene 4.00pm Nicky Home 7.30 Paul Coyte 10.00 Mark Forrest 2.00-8.00am Robin Banks

### RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, with Andrew MacGregor Byrd (Mass for Four Voices); Delius (Cello Concerto); Vivaldi (Violin Concerto in G, Op 2 No 6); Liszt (Prelude and Fugue on Bach); Sibelius (Spring Fies Fast, Op 13 No 4); The First Kiss, Op 26 No 1); Gerstwin (Second Rhapsody). 9.00 Morning Collection, with Catriona Young Chopin (Polonaises, Op posth; in G minor and B flat, 1817); Vaughan Williams (Mass in G minor); Walton (Viola Concerto). 10.00 Musical Encounters. Presented by Peter Burton-Page. Artist of the Week: Charles Groves conducts the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Grace Williams (Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes) 10.12 Chaperon (Medea, Act 3); Shostakovich (Scherzo, Op 1); Haydn (Piano Sonata in C, H XVI 48); Prokofiev (Dreams); Smirnov (Sonata for flute and harp); Shostakovich (Scherzo, Op 7); Delius (Sea Dances). 12.00 Composer of the Week: Debussy. Includes excerpts from Pelléas et Mélisande starring George Shirley, tenor, and Elisabeth Soderstrom, soprano. 1.00pm Birmingham Lunchtime Concert, live from Stuck One, Pabbie Mill, Mayrums Sella, violin, and Caroline Palmer, piano. Britten (Sella, Op 6); Beethoven Violin Sonata in G Op 96). 2.00 Schools Together 2.20 Time and Tune 2.40 Drama Workshop. 3.00 Midweek Choice, presented

by Susan Sharpe. Includes: Jarnett (Praeludium for small orchestra); Adam Seapiping (Viola da gamba); Coleclough-Taylor (Suite, Othello). 4.00 Choral Evensong, from the Chapel of Claire College, in Cambridge. 5.00 The Music Machine, with Janice Forsyth. 5.15 In Tune, Duparc (Au pays ou se fait le gendre); Haydn (Piano Trio in B flat, Op 17). 6.00 BBC Rush Hour Concert, live from the Wigmore Hall in London. The Gould Piano Trio with Philip Dukes, viola, and Dominic Sefton, cello. 6.30 Beethoven (Variations on Ich bin der Schneider Kakadu); Schubert (Piano Quintet in A, D 667) (3/5). 7.00 Cocktails. The third of five sequences of dance music from 1920-1945 (t). 7.30 Pages from a Notebook. A selection of pieces from Bach's family music album. 7.45 Acts and Gestures, by Handel. Live from the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London. Barbara Bonney, soprano, Hans Peter Blochwitz, tenor, Rufus Muller, tenor, and Jeremy White, bass, with the Choir and Orchestra of the English Concert under Trevor Pinnock 8.55 An English Evening 8.55 Part 2. 9.55 Emotion Pictures, by Wim Wenders (3/5). 10.15 Voters. See Choice. 10.45 Night Waves, with Richard Cole. 11.30 Composer of the Week: Georg Muffat (t). 12.30-1.00 Jazz Notes with Digby Fairweather

### RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping Forecast (LW only) 6.00 News Briefing and weather 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Prayer for the Day 6.30 Today and 7.25, 8.25 Sport. 7.45 Thought for the Day 8.40 Yesterday in Parliament 8.58 Weather. 9.00 News 9.05 Midweek. With Times columnist Libby Purves and guests. 10.00 News: A Reprising Fellow (FM only) (3/4). 10.00 Daily Service (LW only). 10.15 This Scepter'd Isle (LW only). 10.30 Woman's Hour. 11.30 Gardeners' Question Time. 12.00 News: You and Yours. 12.25pm Chambers. A new five-part sitcom, by Clive Coleman, about the questionable practices of a group of bankers. With John Bird, James Fleet and Lesley Sharp 12.55 Weather. 1.00 The World at One, with Nick Clarke. 1.40 The Archers 1.55 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 News: London Particulars. The second of a two-part Victorian detective thriller by John Peacock. With Todd Carly and Charles Simpson. 3.00 News: The Afternoon Shift. 4.00 News 4.05 Kaleidoscope. Paul Gambaccini reviews the new cinema releases including Twelve Monkeys and Struck. 4.45 Short Story: Hilda's Lark, by Michael Carson. Read by David Timson. 5.00 PM 5.50 Shipping Forecast. 5.55 Weather. 6.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.30 Counterpoint, with Ned Sherrin (t). 7.00 News 7.05 The Archers.

7.20 Science and Wonderers. In a society where we have a greater understanding of the human brain, is there room for the religious language of the spirit (3/5). 8.05 Noel Coward — From His Diaries. See Choice. 8.35: Key Witness. Sir Frank Roberts discusses with Alan Watson his involvement with British foreign policy in Europe from 1930-88 (1/3). 9.00 Costing the Earth. Mark Whittaker looks at the relationship between technology and the people charged with protecting the environment. 9.30 Kaleidoscope (t) 9.59 Weather. 10.00 The World Tonight, with Robin Lustig. 10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Devil's Own Work, by Alan Judd (3/5) (t). 11.00 Seymour the Fractal Cat. The comedy adventure of Gary Parker. With Greg Proops and John Hegley (2/5). 11.30 We Know Everything (FM only) The solutions to queries revealed by Don Gasier and Paul Powell (t). 11.30 Today in Parliament (LW only). 11.45 Elastic Planet (FM only) The first of a six-part comedy of connections by Ben Macdonald. With Minnie Margolis, Dan Strauss, Kerry Shale, Michael Smkins and Gary Waldholm (t). 12.00 News incl 12.27am weather. 12.30 The Late Book: Kitchen, by Banana Yoshimoto. Read by Emily Wood (3/5) 12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As World Service.

**FREQUENCY GUIDE.** RADIO 1. FM 97.6-99.8. RADIO 2. FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3. FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4. FM 92.4-94.8. LW 198. 720. RADIO 5 LIVE. MW 683, 695. WORLD SERVICE. MW 648. LW 105.8 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM. FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO. FM 108.8. MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO. MW 1053, 1089. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith and Susan Thomson

8.30PM TONIGHT

GHOSTHUNTERS

### A Television Premiere

Reports of hauntings, apparitions and poltergeists are so common that they cannot be dismissed as fantasy. What lies behind them?

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# Hands up, who'd like to lose their marbles?

This morning we should know the result of an interesting telephone vote. Would Britons restore the Elgin Marbles to the Parthenon? At the end of William G. Stewart's *With-out Walls* programme last night (Channel 4), he gave out those yes-no-89 numbers as if to say "But that's enough from me. Those Greeks believed in democracy! Come on, folks: now you decide."

Now this was in fact a cunning twist to that wonderful old ideal of democracy that the Greeks dreamt up. Because, in case you didn't see it, Stewart's "Fifteen to One Special" was a thorough, reasoned plea in favour of cultural restitution, with all potential objections neatly answered and dispatched. In the course of an hour, the case for retaining the Marbles was made only twice: by Sir David Wilson losing his temper in an interview (it's cultural fascism!) and by Lord Inglewood of Hert-

tag. So when this vote was proposed, a whiff of rodent stayed my eager hand. "Jeremy Paxman wouldn't approve of this," I told myself, firmly. Which was reason enough (as always).

So today an overwhelming telephone vote may suggest that the British will give the Marbles back, while actually proving nothing of the sort. Personally I agree with Stewart on this issue, but that homely phrase "own worst enemy" applied to this programme, as it so frequently does to this compulsively lark-driven series. What was the lark last night? Well, of course, place Stewart in his regular *Fifteen to One* studio, where he is a game show host, with busts of Greek gods in place of contestants! Reduce the issue to question-and-answer! Present the proceedings in a flatly lit long-shot of Stewart's double-breasted blazer! Mercifully, at least the Greek gods did not take part in a knockout quiz —

perhaps because, in the usual uncooperative manner of Greek statues, some of them were facing the wrong way.

Stewart's only weak argument was his emotional appeal. If Hitler had stolen Nelson's Column and erected it in Berlin, we would demand its return, wouldn't we? Remember Nelson's Column, he urged us. But try getting worked up about this hypothetical, try shaking your fist in the direction of Berlin, and you will find it does not come easily.

Yesterday afternoon The *Lowdown* (BBC1) concerned a young would-be magician called Keelan Lyster. At one point, he consulted David Berglas, the president of the Magic Circle, and Berglas performed a trick. "Name any card," said Berglas. Lyster chose the six of hearts. Berglas cast a full pack of cards on to the table, and the six of



Lynne Truss

hearts jumped out. "How did you do that?" asked the wide-eyed youth. "Very well," came the reply. It was a nice moment, but its smart evasion kept haunting me as the evening progressed. Both *The Works* and *The Technophobe's Guide to the Future* (both BBC2) seemed frustratingly low on explanation, even though intended for intelligent viewers. "How do they do that?" I kept asking: to the

reply, "Oh, you know, well enough." Perhaps I was misled by the title of *The Works*, but in this first of a new series of arts-documentaries, the story concerned a dangerously flawed office block in Manhattan — Citicorp — and it seemed quite crucial to ascertain, you know, why it was in danger of falling down. Especially if, when it fell, it was predicted to initiate a domino effect, knocking down skyscrapers all the way to Central Park.

But by the end of half an hour, I just knew that "How did they do that?" was "Dangerously." The physics were still a mystery. But then, to be fair, the physics seemed mysterious to the people who'd built it, too. Engineer William LeMessurier explained how he had subsequently worked out the wind factor required to knock down the building, and calculated it occurred every 16 years. "I'm 52," he said: "it could happen in my

lifetime." This was a surprise not only for its selfish logic, but because the poor bloke looked 70 if he was a day.

As if determined not to tip over in a wind itself, *All Fall Down* was a rather stolid documentary. Just as the physics were missing, so was drama, which was odd. I mean, for heaven's sake, these men were faced at one point with the decision to "own up" and evacuate an enormous area in the most famous city in the world, Hurricane Ella approached, the clock ticked on the wall, the repair-work spot-welding on the building was only half done, and down below New York's blithely hailed cabs, raised umbrellas, and ate cheesecake, unaware of the disaster movie unfolding above their heads.

I'm not saying *The Works* should have employed a snotty-but-brave Bruce Willis, welding at

midnight in a vest. But *All Fall Down* was oddly lacking in narrative excitement: it was almost dreamlike. Last autumn's documentary series *The Limit* (BBC2) tackled similar engineering stories to much greater effect. Perhaps the problem here was that the engineers were still pole-axed from the horror of it all.

Finally, *The Technophobe's Guide to the Future* is a lively magazine with youthful, big-personality presenters who test new techno products rather than explain how they work. But it is enjoyable, and it has statistics. Apparently 650,000 people in Britain have home cinema systems. One such, visited by Domhnik Diamond, had spent £33,000 on it. "You can buy a lot of things for £33,000," said Diamond. "A very good car, an extremely poor centre forward, or 165,000 bags of crisps." An admirable effort, I thought, to get the thing in perspective.

## CHOICE

## East: The Hidden Troubles

BBC2, 7.30pm

Dalit Dhalwal, an increasingly familiar presence on Channel 4's excellent news reports from Northern Ireland on the racism suggesting that it parallels the 25 years of hostilities between the two main white communities, but Ulster's ethnic minority has grown to some 15,000 and it is increasingly subject to abuse and attack. Nor can it claim the protection of the RUC as in 1970 there was no perceived need for it outside the British mainland. Among those appearing in Dhalwal's film are a Chinese restaurant owner forced into hiding in England after repeated attacks, two Pakistani families whose houses have been set on fire and a young victim of racial bullying in the school playground.

## Lonely Planet

Channel 4, 8.30pm

The travel series for the young and intrepid visits three provinces of southwest China in the company of Justine Shapiro. Gallantly abandoning home comforts, she endures a three-hour journey by horse and cart, and another two hours on foot, to say hello to a remote hill tribe making its first television appearance. Since this part of China was opened to Western tourists only in 1984, the lack of exposure might not be surprising. Elsewhere Shapiro is game enough to explore cultural differences, even if this means eating dog meat or submitting to acupuncture. In Chengdu, capital of the largest Chinese province Sichuan, she samples the "liveliest nightlife in China" (though you wonder how she knows). It sounds promising but seems to offer nothing more exciting than an antiques market.

## Modern Times: Ellen's in Exile

BBC2, 9.00pm

Six years ago Stephen Lambert made the sort of documentary which you do not easily forget. Called *Hilarys in Hiding*, it charted a bitter custody battle over a young American girl. Her mother, a plastic surgeon, accused her father, a dentist of molesting the child and raping her. Hilary is now called Ellen and Lambert's new film brings the painful story up to date. Frustrated by the American courts, Ellen's mother sent her to New Zealand to escape the father's clutches. He has always maintained his innocence and continues to fight the case step by step. Now 13, Ellen wants to end her interminable exile but her legal position in the United States is uncertain. She is adamant that she does not want to see her father. The case has gone as far as Congress, where a Bill is being discussed that would allow Ellen to come home on her own terms.

## Madison

BBC1, 9.30pm

The unlikely premise of what promises to be an enjoyable series is that a convicted murderer can come out of prison with a law degree and make a new career in the legal profession. The twist is that John Peter Madison (Ian McShane) has always denied killing his wife and is determined to find out who did. Blocking his way are a couple of bent cops determined to rub him out before he gets to the truth. Although a subplot gives Madison a dying son to add to the tragedy of his murdered wife, the overall tone is, surprisingly, far from dark. The script by Ian Kennedy Martin establishes a resourceful hero who can usually get what he wants by cutting corners and knowing the right people. Some may see echoes of that other jailbird, Lovejoy, though Madison has a shorter and tidier haircut. Peter Waymark

## The History Channel

4.00pm, 7.00pm, 10.00pm, 11.00pm

4.00pm: *History Channel* (7.00pm) 5.00 *Secret Service* (10.00pm) 6.00 *Secret Service* (11.00pm) 7.00 *Secret Service* (12.00pm) 8.00 *Secret Service* (1.00pm) 9.00 *Secret Service* (2.00pm) 10.00 *Secret Service* (3.00pm) 11.00 *Secret Service* (4.00pm) 12.00 *Secret Service* (5.00pm) 1.00 *Secret Service* (6.00pm) 2.00 *Secret Service* (7.00pm) 3.00 *Secret Service* (8.00pm) 4.00 *Secret Service* (9.00pm) 5.00 *Secret Service* (10.00pm) 6.00 *Secret Service* (11.00pm) 7.00 *Secret Service* (12.00pm) 8.00 *Secret Service* (1.00pm) 9.00 *Secret Service* (2.00pm) 10.00 *Secret Service* (3.00pm) 11.00 *Secret Service* (4.00pm) 12.00 *Secret Service* (5.00pm) 1.00 *Secret Service* (6.00pm) 2.00 *Secret Service* (7.00pm) 3.00 *Secret Service* (8.00pm) 4.00 *Secret Service* (9.00pm) 5.00 *Secret Service* (10.00pm) 6.00 *Secret Service* (11.00pm) 7.00 *Secret Service* (12.00pm) 8.00 *Secret Service* (1.00pm) 9.00 *Secret Service* (2.00pm) 10.00 *Secret Service* (3.00pm) 11.00 *Secret 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## RACING 45

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## Three new faces in England squad

## Venables makes alternative arrangements

By ROB HUGHES, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

ONE man's injury is another's opportunity and England's preparations for the European football championship have been carved up as though with a surgeon's knife. Yesterday, Terry Venables named his squad for the considerable test against Croatia at Wembley next Wednesday and included Jason Wilcox, the Blackburn Rovers winger, who, 13 months after an operation to repair a cruciate ligament, has the chance to challenge for a place on the left side of England's Euro '96 team.

In the same breath, the England coach had to announce that Alan Shearer is out of the Croatia game. He will enter hospital tomorrow morning for an operation to cure a persistent groin strain.

The Blackburn news, good and bad, overshadowed muted celebrations in London, where two of the capital's young and gifted sons are on the threshold of their first appearances for the full England side. Such is the paucity of fit England centre backs — Tony Adams, Gary Pallister, Steve Howey and Gareth Southgate are all absent — that opportunity knocks for Ugo Ehiogu, of Aston Villa, born 23 years ago in Hackney, and Sol Campbell, 21, of Tottenham Hotspur and from Newham in east London. Both are mobile, adventurous players, and one or other will play against Croatia, probably alongside Mark Wright, of Liverpool, a man at the other extreme of the age limit and another wrestling with injury.

So the medical bulletins go on and on around Venables. At Highbury, on Monday night, he checked on the form

of Campbell, whose pace and versatility matched Ian Wright until, late in the game, he surrendered to cramp. But Venables also witnessed the return of Darren Anderton, a player he hopes even more earnestly will recuperate from a long absence through injury. On the field for just 12 minutes, Anderton nevertheless displayed the gliding movement, the touch and vision for which Venables was looking. He is omitted from the squad to allow Tottenham to give him as many matches

whether there is an ounce of residual fear in the player.

And, if it seemed curious that Blackburn should report yesterday that Shearer intends to play against Wimbledon tonight — indeed he is determined to score his thirtieth goal of the season before meeting the scalpel — then let the player speak for himself: "It's disappointing, but by doing what I'm doing now [having the operation], the specialist is confident that I will be fit for Euro '96." Time will tell.

Venables took the news philosophically; he had no choice. Theoretically, he has the very best English players to select from, but it is a fact that, come the moments that matter, prized players are wounded.

While Venables has called up Stan Collymore to fill Shearer's boots, he is likely to persevere with the Sheeringham-Ferdinand combination which troubled Bulgaria last month. Fowler and Collymore is an alternative, but alternative is the key word.

Ehiogu, 6ft 1in and more than 12 stone, has risen tall since West Bromwich Albion sold him for £40,000 to Villa. He had an intriguing battle of wits and speed with Faustino Asprilla on Sunday. Ehiogu, a defender who can operate in the three-man rearguard which Venables would like to use, was stretched to the limits, twice badly fouling the Colombian, but nevertheless stuck to his task, to his elusive man, like a veteran.

He is more likely than Campbell to make the team against Croatia. Yet Campbell is evidence of Venables's long memory, and of the efforts to provide a link between England schoolboy potential and the full national side.

Campbell was taught the game by John Cartwright, at England's School of Excellence, then reschooled under Osvaldo Ardiles and Venables as he rose swiftly into the Tottenham first team. Playing left back, right back, his preferred midfield, centre forward and centre half, this boy, whom his colleagues in the victorious 1993 England European Youth Cup-winning team dubbed Garth, seemed to accept every challenge.

Amazingly, for one who suffered from cramp a couple of nights ago, his physique seems never to have rebelled for long against the loads inflicted upon it. While still growing, physically and mentally, he has come through three turbulent seasons in Premiership football, and those who know him well have no doubts that he will adapt and stay in the England team, given the chance.



Cerón and Sobanska add a spring to their step yesterday as they prepare for the marathon. Photograph: Robin Mayes

## Figa stays behind as Sobanska defends her title

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

SOME get to compete in the Flora London Marathon, others get no further than training for it. Figa the dachshund has been running 45 miles a week in preparation for the race on Sunday, but Figa has been left at home while Malgorzata Sobanska, his owner, defends the title she won last year. Dogs are not allowed to run in the London Marathon. Anyway, where would you pin a number on a dachshund?

Sobanska trains twice a day and, on the second run, the easy one, her pet goes with her. Figa is best of it this weekend because Sunday will not be easy. Sobanska, from Poland, faces, among others, Liz McColgan, a Scottish terrier if ever there was one.

When Sobanska won last year, it took her national federation and parents by surprise. "Her family were watching on Eurosport and they were all crying — mother, aunt, sister, father," Piotr Mankowski, her coach, said. Though a Sobanska victory would be no surprise — she has recently set personal bests at five and 15 kilometres — her parents will not attend. They will watch on television in Poland. "My mother worries so it's best they do not come," Sobanska said.

Dionicio Cerón, from Mexico, the men's defending champion, will have none of his family in London either. "Why would you take your wife to work?" Cerón said at last year's marathon. Racing is strictly business for Cerón, who, if he becomes the first man to win three successive Londons and sets a world best, will take his earnings from the event to about \$1 million.

Is he confident? "I am looking for victory, but I am human and sometimes a human has problems," Cerón, the only athlete to beat Zbir 9min twice in London, said. Two recent half-marathons — in 61min 5sec and 62min 16sec — speak of a champion in form. With arguably the strongest field in the history of the event there to challenge Cerón, no wonder David Bedford, the elite race director, was suggesting yesterday that London could see its first sub-2hr 8min race. Greyhound rather than dachshund pace.

## Title race approaches extra time

By PETER BALL

THE FA Carling Premiership title last year was not decided until the last day of the season. With the finishing post looming into view, Manchester United and Newcastle United take the latest fences tonight knowing that it could go even further this time, with the first championship play-off needed to separate the clubs.

Manchester United go into the game against Leeds United at Old Trafford with the advantage of a three-point lead, a goal difference of 29 against 27 and they have scored two more goals than Newcastle, who meet Southampton at St James' Park. Should it remain the same after tonight, should Newcastle win their game in hand 2-0 and should the teams' other results match, they will finish with identical records.

Premier League rules then call for a play-off on a neutral ground. Although such a match would fill Wembley, finding a suitable date could be a problem if Liverpool and Manchester United draw in the FA Cup Final on May 11. A positive result would leave the replay date, May 16, free for a play-off. With England play-

ing Hungary on May 18 and departing for their Far East tour two days later, the schedule otherwise is tight.

"I don't think it's fair to pile everything on one extra game after a 38-game season," Terry McDermott, the Newcastle assistant manager, said yesterday. Alternatives, however, are thin on the ground. A decision based on the meetings between the clubs would give the title to United; shar-

Brown's waiting game... 43  
Waddle rejects contract 43

ing the title, as has happened in the cricket county championship, would not yield an entrant for the European Cup.

"I don't think it will come to that," Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, said after training yesterday. "But we know how important goals are now."

Gary Pallister — described by his manager as "the best centre half in the country" — returns after missing nine games but United's main problems have been at the other end. Apart from their 6-0 win at Bolton, scoring goals in recent games has been a

question of "if not [Eric] Cantona, then who?"

Leeds's form should provide Ferguson's team with the opportunity to give themselves a significant advantage. Stories linking the Leeds captain, Gary McAllister, with Rangers have surfaced again and with the future of their manager, Howard Wilkinson, the subject of continuing speculation, a picture of a club in disarray is painted, but the Yorkshire team have offered unyielding defence in recent League meetings.

If the Premiership is to be decided in a photo finish on the number of goals scored, most people would back Newcastle should Ferdinand's goal on Sunday presage the end of the England striker's barren spell. However, Ferguson said: "Southampton are one club we're confident about in terms of trying. It's either that or they go down."

Southampton's win against Manchester United on Saturday, which opened up the Premiership race again, and the return to form of Matthew Le Tissier will send them to St James' Park with more confidence than seemed likely. "Le Tissier was superb against us," Ferguson said, but in the

Premiership Southampton have only won one away game and Newcastle have lost at home only once all season.

With Coventry City, who occupy the third relegation place a point behind Southampton, playing at Nottingham Forest tonight, the situation is almost as tight at the bottom. Manchester City have the worst goal difference by a long way, but if they were to escape, it is conceivable — especially if Newcastle run riot tonight — that Southampton and Coventry could also require a play-off.

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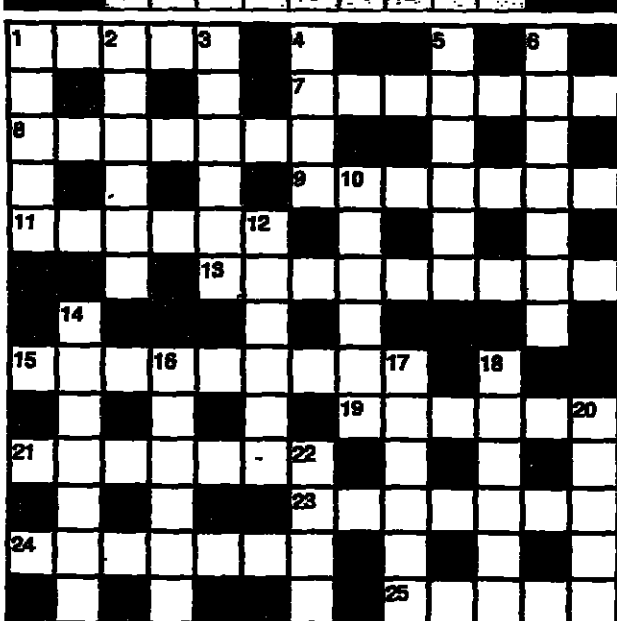
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No 758

## ACROSS

- 1 Leafy shelter; violinist? (5)
- 7 Member of inner circle (7)
- 8 Gravelly beach; English (anag.) (7)
- 9 A Glorious day; a Shakespearean Night (7)
- 11 Transfixing pin (6)
- 13 Gogol comic novel (4,5)
- 15 Thick fog (3-6)
- 19 Bede, Cuthbert lie in its cathedral (6)
- 21 Trying to be refined, proper (7)
- 23 Initially (2,5)
- 24 Crane; oil-well framework (7)
- 25 Throw out (5)

## DOWN

- 1 Ground, principle (5)

## 2 Voluntary relinquishment

- (of right) (6)
- 3 Designed for hard use (6)
- 4 Special food regime (4)
- 5 Old Venetian business centre (6)
- 6 Morale-boosting speech (3,4)
- 10 Closely bound; married (6)
- 12 Continue after break: US CV (6)
- 14 Wife of Ahab, a wicked schemer (7)
- 16 Topical ridicule (6)
- 17 Pleat; annoy (6)
- 18 Run into attack: sum demanded (6)
- 20 Sacred choral piece (5)
- 22 Red pigment; body of water (4)

## SOLUTION TO NO 757

- ACROSS: 1 Cuff 3 Panchant 5 Tearful 10 Roost  
11 Horror story 13 Levite 15 Steady 17 Sideracked  
20 Aroma 21 Maestro 22 Hush-hush 23 Lyre
- DOWN: 1 Catch-all 2 Flair 4 Enlist 5 Car boot sale  
6 Apology 7 Tutu 9 Plug to death 12 Syndrome  
14 Viscous 16 Stumps 18 Kitty 19 Rash

## SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 753

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- ACROSS: 1 Tundra 3 Mope 8 Aene 9 Apoplexy  
10 Bull's-eye 11 Owen 12 Shinto 14 Nimbus 16 Shot  
18 Recipient 20 Detainee 21 Comb 22 Wall 23 Trendy
- DOWN: 2 Uncouth 3 Dwell 4 An axe to grind 5 Malcolm  
6 Pkide 7 Come on a treat 13 Not half 15 Unrained  
17 Hyena 19 Cane

1st PRIZE of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND's domestic or international network is D Hurley, Bournemouth.

2nd PRIZE of a return ticket to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND's domestic network is H Andrews, Aylesford, Hampshire. All flights subject to availability.

## Lions' tour comes under threat

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE future of rugby union's five nations' championship hangs in the balance. Yesterday, England's decision to terminate a gentlemen's agreement over television rights evoked a forthright response from the other unions, who will review their international relationships at all levels.

The implicit threat is that they will refuse to play England in the foreseeable future, which will also mean the end of tours abroad by the British Isles (they are due to visit South Africa next year) and cause immense damage to the game's fabric in the northern hemisphere.

The other member unions of the committee will now be requested to consider the future format of the five nations' championship and additionally the question of relationships at all international representative levels, "a statement said after the five nations' committee met in Dublin yesterday, adding ominously: "This breakdown by England from the existing arrangements could have im-

plications for British Lions tours."

The five nations will meet again on April 27 in Dublin, but the Rugby Football Union (RFU), adopting the position of a party more sinned against than sinning, said that it sought a practice prevalent in other sports and added that France had always negotiated their own television rights.

"The RFU understands that the five nations' committee are considering the five nations' format for the future," Tony Hallen, the RFU secretary said. "We believe that all unions will be able to benefit individually from our decision."

The Scottish Rugby Union said that every effort would be made to change England's perspective. "The unilateral decision taken by the RFU to negotiate its own broadcasting rights is a point of principle which would undermine the whole structure of the five nations' championship," Freddie McLeod, Scotland's representative, said. Syd Millar, the Irish union's president, called it "the biggest threat to rugby union since the [rugby league] split of 1895".

There are two underlying

assumptions to England's stance. One is that they will continue to dominate the championship and the other that their significance within the championship is greater than any other country's.

The first should be true, given England's superior playing strength to all save France, but history shows that only within the past six years, in modern times, has it been the case. The second ignores the fact that the championship sustains its fascination not because of the quality of play but because of its sheer unpre-



Hallen: "benefit to all"

dictability, to which Ireland, Scotland or Wales contribute.

What England may justifiably try to sell for themselves is competitions in which their clubs are involved. That is precisely what Wales do, making their own arrangements with BBC Wales and the Welsh language channel, S4C. England followed suit by grabbing 85 per cent of the £7 million contract with Sky Sports, but the timing of their breakaway now, when they are at odds with the clubs who are their product, is appalling.

It is an illustration of rugby's weakness in the market place, vis-à-vis football, that it seeks to sell all its products on the back of the international game. The five nations have written to ten broadcast companies, inviting tenders for the championship and seven other competitions, among them European, Anglo-Welsh, cross-border and domestic league and cup. On the other hand, there is a variety available capable of sustaining a relationship with the mixed economies of terrestrial and satellite television.

When the dust has settled, this, maybe, is what the game will have.

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